

locker letters and skaterboys

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locker letters and skaterboys

by [hiclaire](#)

Summary

a british exchange student meets a skaterboy who incontrovertibly hates him.

it doesn't help that he finds himself with an anonymous penpal with the name "dream," the same day.

Notes

as always, if any cc involved at all expresses their discomfort, i will either (if they are barely mentioned / a minor character) write them out or (if not) delete the story completely. the comfort of creators involved is 100% my priority :)

also, i'm basing this off of their personas rather than them as people. please remember to listen to cc's barriers (and if anyone ever sees them say they're uncomfortable with anything

in this story, please let me know so i can take this down!!)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

one ○ i hate when people hate me

GEORGE

George walked hesitantly out of his smaller-than-what-would-be-expected plane as he headed through the silver tunnel towards the terminal.

He glanced hurriedly at his surroundings, taking in the muffled sounds of other airport travellers. The over-air-conditioned environment was biting with the taste of cheap air-freshener and sweat. Around him, he could hear rushing families and couples, racing to catch their planes. He shook his head, snapping himself out of his thoughts, and headed for the brightly-lit exit.

When he finally reached the baggage claim area, George pulled out his phone and opened Discord.

He absentmindedly blew on the short pieces of brown hair falling onto his face as he quickly typed out a message for *Sapnap*, the member of his host-family for his education exchange program that he was in contact with.

GeorgeNotFound: hi

im here ! baggage claim area 7 lol.

It took barely ten seconds for Sapnap to respond.

Sapnap: Be right there

Sorry I'm late Lmao, had to deal with some stupid shit.

George rolled his eyes in front of the screen, but responded neutrally nonetheless.

GeorgeNotFound: np

After around ten minutes of waiting, a cheery voice immediately called for George's attention.

“George!” the man yelled, instantly collapsing into George with a, to what George deemed uncomfortable, hug.

George turned and immediately matched the gruff voice with the face. George was well-accustomed to the man’s voice, after spending hours in Discord VC with the boy going through the details of his trip.

George followed the American brunet to what he assumed was his car: a white Jeep Wrangler. George stifled a snicker at Sapnap’s very stereotypical car of choice.

After the boys settled into the ride, Sapnap explained that the drive would be a little ways away.

“We’re in Miami right now-”

“I know, Sapnap, I flew in here.”

“Right, right,” Sapnap said nodding, eyes still (thankfully) glued to the road. “We’re heading down to Orlando. Should be around a... 3 hour drive. Feel free to use aux or something.”

George nodded and pulled out his phone, plugging it in. He opened Spotify, and pressed shuffle on his playlist entitled “some tunes for the road.”

Immediately, the opening notes of “Neon Hell” by Current Joys flooded into the sound system. At this, Sapnap seemed to almost scoff.

“What is it?” George asked, feeling suddenly scrutinized.

Sapnap shook his head. “Nothing, dude. You’re just into that like... indie shit. Just like my best friend Clay, man. I swear, that guy won’t stop listening to The 19-fucking-75.”

George laughed, although it was rather forced. Sapnap seemed to pick up on this, considering he stopped talking and let the music take over the car.

George arrived at Sapnap's house, a spitting image of what he assumed an American family home would look like. Sapnap showed him around, introducing him to his parents, and taking him on a quick look around at every room in their house.

In Sapnap's room, a certain wall decoration caught George's eye. "A... *Texas* flag... in Florida?" he asked, a brow raised.

Sapnap seemed to roll his eyes at this. "I may live in Florida, but I'm a Texas boy at heart."

George nodded, pretending like he understood what Sapnap was talking about. Eventually, Sapnap took him to an eerily blank room with only a white bed and white walls.

"Your humble abode," Sapnap introduced dramatically. "You can decorate it as you want, by the way. It's basically yours now. Consider it a...blank canvas."

George laughed lightly at the dramatics as he nodded. Almost instantly, George felt a wave of exhaustion rush over him. He glanced down at his phone: 8:32 *PM*. It would've been around 2 am in Britain, so his jetlag was beginning to set in at a rather uncomfortable pace.

He waved Sapnap off, closed the door, and succumbed to sleep.

George woke to Sapnap practically screaming.

"George! Time for school, dipshit!" he yelled, voice muffled from behind the door.

George hastily got up, throwing on the outfit he had laid out the night before. It was a fairly basic outfit, but nice all the same. He decided on a pair of black cargo Dickies along with a blue crew neck with a white collared shirt underneath. For his shoes, he relied on his tried and true: Black

high-top Converse.

He exited his room to Sapnap's approving gaze. The man grinned at him. "You look absolutely cracked, my guy."

George nodded, unsure what he meant, but presuming it was a compliment.

The boys said their goodbyes to Sapnap's parents and packed into Sapnap's car.

When they finally pulled into the school lot, George followed Sapnap into the entrance. Here, there was a group of people who were, presumably, Sapnap's friends.

All eyes seemed to be on him as Sapnap grinned walking towards them.

"Oh, you must be George!" a kind and fairly high voice welcomed. George nodded in response. "I'm Bad, by the way."

George raised his eyebrow. "...Bad?"

"-Just a nickname," Sapnap offered, leading to an understanding hum from George.

"Sapnap has told us all about you," a blonde girl, who introduced herself as Niki, added.

"Yeah," someone supposedly named Antfrost chimed in. "You're going to be *quite* the chick magnet with that style of yours."

George blushed at this - not at the comment, per se, but the implications going with it.

"Oh, interesting," George said, giggling nervously. The strange reaction seemed to draw the eyes

of all of Sapnap's friends on him, but after a few seconds of silence, they laughed nonetheless.

"What locker number are you?" Sapnap asked, thankfully for George, changing the topic.

George double-checked his schedule before answering. "Uh... 404."

Sapnap nodded. "I'm 301, so if you need anything, let me know."

The chatter of the group subsided until it was immediately silent. George noticed the group's attention move to something behind him.

George slowly turned around and was met with the figure of a man only around a foot away from him. The man, however, was especially tall, nearly towering over him. George took in the boy's features; he had what George could infer as green eyes. His nose was slightly crooked, but it fit his face rather well somehow. From George's proximity to the boy, he could make out small tussock-brown freckles on the bridge of his nose. His outfit was rather tantalizing as well; he had on black pants with white stitching, not too different from his own, and a black turtleneck. On top was an old-looking band tee, of one George was unfamiliar with. On his neck laid several silver chains. The man's hair was golden, laying messily on his head. On his feet were ratted up black converse, just as George was wearing.

"Who the hell is this?" the man asked, motioning to George, voice low and unwarrantedly judgemental. George felt his cheeks warm with embarrassment.

Sapnap seemed to roll his eyes. "This is *George*, Clay. I told you about him. Quit being a dick, man. He's nervous enough as it is."

The 'Clay' man Sapnap had told him about. The mysterious blond man seemed to scoff at this, but backed down all the same. "It's no problem, really," George mumbled quietly. This seemed to peak Clay's interest, as he turned to face him once again.

"What did you say?" Clay asked, leaning forward. His expression was pensive, as if he was genuinely curious.

"I just said it's okay. I don't want to be a bother," George clarified, twiddling his thumbs nervously.

Clay snickered at this. “Chill out, dude. I’m just messing with you, oh my God.”

George rolled his eyes, but felt a wave of relief run over him all the same.

Sapnap leaned over to whisper to him. “Clay can be a dick sometimes,” he started, “He’ll warm up to you.”

George nodded and focused his attention back on Clay. “Messing” with him or not, it was evident Clay wasn’t exactly pleased with George. Nevertheless, George shook his head and ignored him.

“What class do you have first, George?” his new acquaintance Niki chimed in.

“Computer Science, I think,” he offered, leading to hums of understanding.

“Clay, you have that too, don’t you?” Sapnap asked, turning to his companion. Clay nodded without a verbal response.

“We should get going,” one of the students offered, and the rest of them seemed to unanimously agree. George recognized where Clay was going and tried to rather sneakily follow a few meters behind him to his class.

His plans were foiled, however, when Clay turned into the men’s bathroom rather than into a class.

Fuck .

George stood idly outside, hoping to catch Clay as he exited to follow him once again. He waited for what seemed like five minutes until he heard a loud and painful-sounding cough from the bathroom. Out of instinct, George ran into the restroom.

There, he was met with the surprised eyes of Clay, who was too busy practically choking on water to greet him.

Clay seemed to quickly recover from the initial shock of George finding him almost accidentally waterboarding himself in the highschool bathroom, a blossoming anger in his eyes.

“What the hell? Were you following me?” Clay shouted, just loud enough that George would be intimidated without anyone outside the bathroom hearing.

“Yes, well I-I... I was following you to hopefully make it to our class,” George offered, voice wavering with anxiety.

“If you haven’t noticed, *this bathroom* isn’t our fucking class,” Clay said, voice significantly quieter.

"Were you skipping or something?" George asked absentmindedly.

George watched the blond man run a hand through his hair as he sighed. He almost seemed... nervous. “Whatever, dude. You better not fucking narc on me.”

George frantically shook his head. “No no, of course not. No one will hear about this, I promise.”

“They better fucking not.”

George nodded.

“If I get shit about this from our professor,” Clay started, turning as he walked to exit the bathroom, “I’ll break your fucking neck.”

George nodded reluctantly. Based solely on Clay’s size, he definitely could.

George pulled up to Computer Science late. He refused to follow Clay out of the bathroom for his own safety, so he opted to take a much longer route to the class, one which was filled with many

confusing areas.

Presumably, considering the blond was situated in their class, Clay's encounter with George had pushed him to at least not skip *this* period.

By the time he got there, there was only one seat available amidst the sea of two-person tables.

One next to *Clay* .

George nervously sat down, greeted with a mutter of “For fuck’s sake,” from the blond boy.

An auburn-haired man who was seemingly their professor, with a grin, walked over to the boys. “You must be George, the exchange student!” he exclaimed, smiling. George could pick up some sort of English accent, although he wasn’t sure exactly the region.

George nodded in response.

“I’m Mr. Philza, but most of my students just call me Philza or Phil. I’m surprised you sat next to this bloke,” he said, motioning light-heartedly at Clay, who only looked up at the mention of himself. “Students are usually too intimidated to sit next to the captain of the Coding Team in comp sci class. A real piece of work, he is.”

George heard Clay force out a laugh, and did so the same. “I didn’t really have an option anyways,” George muttered to himself, far too quiet for either Clay nor Philza to hear.

George watched as Philza walked to the front of the classroom and cleared his throat. “Okay, class! Welcome to a new year at Manberg High. As you all are probably aware, or perhaps not, this class relies heavily on team and group collaborative effort and work. The student sitting next to you will be your partner for the year, so get comfortable!”

“Fuck no,” George heard Clay mutter, which only further intensified the dark feeling in his stomach. *Why did Clay hate him so much ?*

The class passed quickly, Philza explaining the syllabus of the class. Before George knew it, he

had gotten through 3 periods, plus a free period where he decided to decorate his locker. Finally, it was lunch.

“George!” Sapnap called out, a grin on his face. George walked over to where he was sitting, and he noticed there were no open seats.

“No worries, George, I was just getting up to leave anyways,” Niki offered, getting up from her seat.

This is when George realized: *The now-open seat was once again next to Clay.*

George reluctantly sat down, and upon doing so, Clay shot up.

“I’ll be leaving now,” Clay offered, waving weakly as George watched him disappear into the hallway.

Sapnap raised a brow, and all of his friends turned to George. “What was that about?”

George shrugged dramatically. “I don’t know,” he admitted. “He’s absolutely hated me from the second I got here.”

Sapnap seemed even more confused at this. “He usually is a little standoffish when new people show up, but it’s never *this* bad. Holy shit, what did you do?” Sapnap asked, almost chuckling.

“I don’t know!” George exclaimed. “I *hate* when people hate me, Jesus Christ.”

Sapnap rolled his eyes at this. “Don’t worry Georgie, he’ll come around.”

“Call me Georgie again and I’ll punch you.”

CLAY

After escaping another interaction with George, Clay wandered absentmindedly through the hallways, looking for something of interest to pass time.

Clay couldn't help but notice a semi-opened locker as he perused the corridors.

Locker 404.

Being the overly-curious and too-bold-for-his-own-good man he was, Clay felt himself open the locker a bit more so he could observe the contents of it.

Clay felt his eyes widen as he let his eyes wander over the interior.

Inside were small photos and memorabilia from bands and pictures he recognized.

There were even small trinkets from video games and pop culture, specifically a styrofoam diamond Minecraft sword and white clout goggles.

Maybe it was a burst of self-confidence, or maybe a moment of impulsivity, but Clay found himself pulling out his binder from his backpack to grab a sheet of paper.

Dear person in locker 404,

Hi. You're probably thinking: who are you, strange person? To that, I will give some backstory. You MAY have left your locker open... and I may be kinda curious, so I peeked inside.

Worth it tho (I promise I'm not a perv I'm just impulsive </3).

I noticed you have an Arctic Monkeys poster. I myself dabble with Alex Turner once in a while. Also, a Minecraft sword? Holy shit- I'm a speedrunner and my PB is 32:21.28 (in 1.14 though. Fuck 1.16 and its stupid enderpearl RNG). We are soulmates HAHA.

Anyways, those clout goggles are cool. Hmmm... maybe I'll call you... Gogy.

You are now Gogy!

From,

- Your Dream Boy (this is all /j btw I promise I'm not a creep AHAHDS!) - I'm locker 812 btw if u wanna write back ;)

Clay quickly threw it into the locker and closed the door.

There was no turning back now.

two ○ a concrete bed

Chapter Summary

George had opened his locker, a white piece of paper with messy pen ink scribbled on it falling out onto the floor.

Out of curiosity, George picked it up and read it.

“Locker 404...”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

GEORGE

George had opened his locker, a white piece of paper with messy pen ink scribbled on it falling out onto the floor.

Out of curiosity, George picked it up and read it.

“*Locker 404...*”

After he had finished examining the note, he felt a blush creep up on his face.

Whoever this “Dream Boy” was was quite the character. George couldn’t lie and say this note wasn’t the *least* bit endearing.

Against his better and more rational judgement, George pulled out a piece of paper of his own as well as a magenta ballpoint pen from his pencil case and began writing.

—

Hello Dream Boy.

I'm going to call you 'Dream' because 1) I'm too lazy to write multiple words and 2) you called me Gogy. What the fuck is that?????

Jokes aside, hi! I guess I should introduce myself (not my name tho muahahaha ... the anonymity is interesting). I'm a senior. I go by he/him pronouns. I like music, Minecraft, coding, and all that stuff. I'm kinda new here. I'd like to think I'm ... somewhat okay of a person.

As for you, Dream, I am praying you aren't some random 40 year old janitor or something ... we shall see I guess.

You may be a speedrunner, but I bet I could WRECK YOU in Bedwars.

Sincerely,

- Gogy (i still hate this name btw.)

—

George dropped it off in the locker Dream had told him was his, 812, and continued through his day, Dream's words flooding his mind.

—

Hey Gogy <3,

I like the name Dream. I think it suits me. Also, I am a senior and go by he/him pronouns as well! Unfortunately, though, not a 40 year old janitor. In 22 years or so, maybe.

I'm your Dream hehehehe ;)))))

Also, no WAYYYY you could beat me in bedwars, man. I would DESTROY you in pvp, no question.

I also code btw. We are meant to be.

Jokes aside, you seem cool! Tell me more about yourself ;)

- Dream <3

Hi Dream,

You are literally flirting with someone you 1) have never seen and 2) don't know the name of. Simp much??? (idk if I used that word correctly, my friend just taught me what it means LOL)

Also, this is a weird question, but are you ok with me semi ranting to you? I think it would be cool to have someone who I don't know to bounce ideas off of ahaha. If not, that's ok!

Have a good day Dream! Fuck you for making "Gogy" a thing :)

- Signed,

Gogy >:(

Heyyyyy Gogyyy,

Yes of course you can rant to me :O

I wouldn't know who you are anyways.

*Also... if you think **this** is flirting, looks like I gotta step up my game.*

Cya babe <3

- Dreamie

Hi Dream,

If you call yourself Dreamie again or call me babe I will burn the letter and never ever respond ever again.

Even so, you can rant to me too :D

Looking forward to getting to know you, Dream. :)

- Gogy :)

It had been around a week since his first day at Manberg High, and George was trying desperately to force himself to accept that Clay simply ... didn't like him. George was happily surprised about the student climate at the school, however. There were many, *many* cute girls, a lot of whom had actually offered George their phone numbers. Each time, however, he would politely decline. According to Niki, they all thought he was "the cute British guy." Yet, George couldn't find it in himself to be interested in any of them. He was still hyper-focused on Clay's hatred for him.

Dream and George, however, had taken to speaking a lot. Practically every day, George found a new letter from the hilariously bold mystery-man. Turns out, he and Dream had a lot in common. George didn't tell Sapnap about him, though. There was really no need, at least not yet. Every time he went to inconspicuously check his locker, he would make up an excuse (most of them varying explanations about forgetting his math textbook).

George had walked into Clay skipping class in the bathroom almost a dozen times now. To be honest, he was confused how a teacher hadn't caught him considering Clay was so terrible at hiding it. Nevertheless, George kept his word. Not for his own safety, but rather in the hopes that it would perhaps make Clay like him a tad bit more.

Surprisingly, he and Clay worked fairly well together during Computer Science, although it was most likely because he and Clay barely exchanged even minuscule conversations with one another.

Still, George continued to entertain the fact that, maybe somehow, he could change Clay's opinion on him. He wasn't sure why, but something about Clay entranced him, as if he *needed* Clay to like him.

SAPNAP

Sapnap opened his computer, checking Discord as he heard a familiar *Ping!*

Clay: minecraft???

Sapnap grinned, eager to play with his best friend.

Sapnap: You know it bro

Brb logging on

After a few minutes, Sapnap joined a voicechat with Clay already in it. The Discord server consisted of Sapnap, Clay, and a few of their friends.

Clay and Sapnap joined the Hypixel Minecraft server, playing a couple rounds of Bedwars before Sapnap heard his door open. Immediately, the exchange student who was living with him walked into his room, smile beaming.

"Sapnap! Guess what!" George said enthusiastically, loud enough where Sapnap knew Clay would probably be able to hear him over the mic.

"What, George?" Sapnap asked, only half paying attention.

"The Arctic Monkeys' band account liked my Tweet!" he exclaimed, Sapnap undoubtedly confused.

Sapnap heard a surprised gasp followed by a scoff from across Discord but mentally chose to

ignore it.

“Who?” Sapnap asked, leading to a snicker from Clay and an exclamation from George.

“The Arctic Monkeys...? As in... the wildly popular band?” George started, seemingly astounded as to how Sapnap didn’t know who that was.

Sapnap shrugged. “I don’t know, dude,” he responded with a light chuckle.

George dramatically rolled his eyes and left Sapnap’s room, closing the door behind him.

“He was just on about some music shit. Sorry about that,” Sapnap offered to Clay.

“Same,” Clay said dryly.

Sapnap felt a confusing feeling manifest in his chest. “Ok, Clay, that’s it. Why do you hate George so much? He hasn’t done shit to you.” Sapnap asked, more aggressively than he had intended.

If it was possible to hear an eyeroll, Sapnap was sure he did. “Dunno,” Clay responded nonchalantly.

“No, Clay, seriously. Miss me with that ‘don’t know’ shit.”

Clay seemed to sigh over the call. “Don’t wanna say,” he offered instead, voice still monotone but now somewhat wavering.

“You’re a fucking idiot, Clay. You know you can talk to me,” Sapnap said, trying to sound as genuine as possible.

“I know,” Clay returned, voice somewhat staticy from his mic. “I’ll tell you when I’m ready, I guess. Can we please change the topic?”

Sapnap agreed, and the boys continued their game of Bedwars.

GEORGE

George woke up to the sound of shuffling outside his door. Immediately, he shot up and checked his phone.

3:47 AM. What the fuck?

George sat up groggily and walked out of his room, where he met Sapnap, eyes wide like a deer in headlights.

“Where are you going at 4 am?” George asked, voice low with exhaustion.

Sapnap rolled his eyes. “Go back to sleep, George.”

George shook his head. “Tell me where you’re going, then maybe.”

Sapnap sighed in what sounded like defeat. “Fine. I’m meeting Clay at the skatepark.”

George’s eyes widened.

Clay was a skaterboy?

*Wait , George thought to himself, why was **that** his initial concern?*

“At 4 am?” he asked in shock.

Sapnap shrugged at this. “It’s empty then.”

George thought for a second before responding. "I'm coming with you!" George announced triumphantly.

Sapnap raised an eyebrow at him. "No...? You're not."

George smirked. "If you don't let me go, I'll gladly wake your parents and let them know your plans."

Sapnap huffed. "Fine. Get dressed and meet me outside in 5."

George returned outside with Sapnap wearing a white turtleneck, blue cropped sweater vest, and blue cotton slacks. For an outfit put together at 4 in the morning, George could admit to himself that he looked pretty good.

George walked alongside Sapnap who was skating - pretty badly, George might add - on the barren paved roads. Eventually, they rolled up towards the gate of the skate park and George caught a glimpse of Clay.

Clay looked, in a word, tantalizing. He was effortlessly landing his tricks, pulling off things George had only seen in movies before. Clay was attempting varial heelflips and frontside-360's like they were nothing, landing them like butter. His outfit was rather nice as well, a black jacket draping over a Joy Division tee and blue cuffed jeans. He was, once again, like George, wearing black high top Converse.

"Ayo, Clay!" Sapnap called out, drawing Clay's attention to the brunet.

"Sapnap, you look like *shit*! Get some sleep, motherfucker!" George heard Clay joke happily, laughing lightly. George watched the joviality of the man before him; he had never seen Clay in a very cheerful mood before, but George couldn't help but be aware of an unfamiliar feeling in his stomach as he was seeing it for the first time. George assumed Clay was unaware of his presence. That is, until Clay's gaze landed on him.

“God damn it, Sapnap. Why is *he* here?” George heard Clay ask, although it was clear George wasn’t meant to hear it.

“I can head out, if that’s what you-” George started meekly.

“No, fuck that. George, you’re fine,” Sapnap said, somewhat calming George’s nerves.

“Whatever,” George heard Clay mutter to himself.

“You’re really good, by the way,” George said quietly, directed towards Clay as he motioned towards his board.

“Thanks. I know,” Clay responded apathetically, now skating away to the other side of the ramp.

George opted to sit on a piece of concrete that neither of the boys were using in order to watch them. Immediately, he could see Clay was objectively much better than Sapnap. His movements were fluid and personal. It was as if Clay was connected with his torn-up board. George noticed after a few minutes of watching him that the bottom of his deck had swirls of pinks, blues, and purples. It was beautiful. George’s eyes were glued to the man, practically entranced by his movements.

His focus was broken when he felt a warm hand on his shoulder. *Sapnap* .

“Quit drooling, Jesus Christ,” Sapnap said, chuckling lightly.

George felt the tips of his ears heat up. “I am *not* drooling. Especially not over *Clay* of all people.”

Sapnap threw his hands up. “Whatever you say, dude,” Sapnap started, beginning to skate away from him once again. “Didn’t take you to be into bad boys, though,” Sapnap added, walking out of earshot from George.

If Sapnap was closer, George would’ve flipped him off.

George allowed himself to contemplate for a moment.

No , he reasoned, *he could barely stand the man's apathy and coldness, let alone **like** him.* He was simply confused as to why Clay hated him so much.

George continued watching the boys before his phone rang, catching his attention with an alarm sound.

6:30 AM - WAKE UP!

George yawned, realizing he had only gotten around 4 hours of sleep back at Sapnap's house. As if exhaustion had suddenly thrown itself at him, George began feeling himself start to drift off on the concrete. He slowly batted his eyelids until the cold concrete became his makeshift bed.

SAPNAP

"Well, *I* can't carry him!" Sapnap exclaimed, watching George's motionless body on the concrete.

"I'm *not* carrying this dipshit," Clay started, clearly annoyed. "Just wake him up and make him walk back."

"C'mon," Sapnap pleaded. "He's gonna take forever. Plus, if we're not back by the time my parents are up, I'm *so* done. Please dude. I'll owe you big time."

Clay seemed to sigh in defeat. "Fine. Fuck you, by the way. I'm gonna need a hit after this," he said, motioning towards George's sleeping figure.

"Yeah, yeah," Sapnap started, somewhat unconvinced that Clay was truly *that* upset he had to carry George. "Get high *later*. For *now*, just pick him up."

Sapnap watched as Clay picked George up. Sapnap had to hold in a snicker when he realized Clay was carrying George *bridal style*.

Yeah , Sapnap thought to himself, *Clay hates George my ass.*

Sapnap chuckled lightly as Clay began skating towards Sapnap's house, George in arms.

Despite Clay's usual apparent hatred for George, Sapnap noticed Clay's gaze was almost soft while Clay was staring at George sleeping in his arms.

Maybe he didn't hate him after all.

CLAY

After eventually dropping off George and Sapnap, Clay headed to school. It was almost 7:30 by then, after all. After he talked with a few friends in the parking lot, and went over certain plans, he entered the corridor. Clay opened his locker, finding another letter from the "Gogy" figure waiting for him as usual. It was marked with the date from the day before - Gogy must've left it in his locker at the end of the school day after Clay had already left.

It was nice to have someone to talk to, especially since there was so much anonymity behind it.

He felt like he could tell Gogy nothing and everything at the same time.

He could tell him his biggest secrets, but not even his name.

Out of a moment of desperation and confusion, he began writing.

Hi Gogy.

I know a while ago you told me I could rant to you, so I guess I'm taking you up on your offer.

If I tell you something, please don't hate me. I'm just confused.

And annoyed.

I fucking hate feelings oh my goddddd

Also I'm so stressed rn.. Fun fact: I hate big groups of people and RN im not having it LOL. I have to go to a party. FML.

I'm sorry I'm ranting to you but I need to tell SOMEONE even if u don't care. Sorry. You don't even know me so I have no idea why I'm telling you but here we go. I feel like I need to tell SOMEONE even if it's some random person i don't know.

I think

I like guys?

Fuck that feels weird to say

Help plz gogy LMAO

Trusting u with this one mate.

If you tell anyone I murder you (this is not an empty threat. I will genuinely wait outside your locker until someone comes up and opens it and punch you in the face)

- Dream <3

Chapter End Notes

still kinda working out a style for this story :) bear with me HAHHA

three ○ a dream

Chapter Summary

George woke to the sound of Sapnap yelling “We’re here!”

Immediately, George’s eyes shot open and he looked to the man who was carrying him.

Clay?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

GEORGE

semi flashback - back to george’s pov of the day before. i will mark when we finally get back to where the last chapter ended chronologically!

George felt a comfortable heat encompass him as he was awoken by light wind. George fluttered his eyes slowly, realizing he was being carried by someone. Due to his drifting consciousness, however, he was still unsure of who. George instinctively leaned into the touch, nuzzling closer into the chest of whoever was holding him. George inhaled deeply, being encompassed by the smell of rosemary and pine. George let out a content hum, returning back into his sleep state.

Through glued-shut eyes, he could almost hear the faint utter of a man’s voice saying “God fucking damn it, George,” rather softly and earnestly, however he assumed it was only his imagination.

George woke to the sound of Sapnap yelling “We’re here!”

Immediately, George's eyes shot open and he looked to the man who was carrying him.

Clay?

George practically fell out of Clay's arms in shock. As he collected himself from his tumble, he tried to piece together a coherent thought.

"Why were you.. Why did you-"

Clay scoffed coldly. "It wasn't my choice, *George* ," the way he said his name felt like venom. "Sapnap made me do it."

"Whatever," George muttered, following Sapnap into his house. George rolled his eyes as Sapnap waved sheepishly at Clay.

Once in the house, George gave Sapnap a pointed look. "What the hell?" he exclaimed.

Sapnap let out a contented chuckle. "I'm just trying to get him not to absolutely hate you, dude."

George's eyes bulged. "Whatever, Sapnap. Him holding me like a fucking bride isn't going to make him hate me any *less* ."

Sapnap rolled his eyes as the boys collected their supplies for school. "Hurry up, George! It's Friday, and I'd rather not have to fucking lug you around!"

George lazily grabbed his backpack and left the house, practically collapsing into Sapnap's car from a mixture of both exhaustion and utter confusion.

- - - -

When the boys finally arrived in the parking lot, George caught a glimpse of Clay. He was already in the lot as well, practicing tricks on his board and skating effortlessly around the white lines in the concrete meant for cars. He had changed from the clothes he was wearing at the skatepark that morning and was instead wearing a red and black flannel, black ripped jeans, and a black t-shirt.

George's breath caught in his throat as he watched Clay turn to their still parked car, skating over. He forced his gaze to look away when Clay caught his eye-contact for a moment.

Sapnap and George exited the car, George watching awkwardly as Clay and Sapnap did some sort of handshake.

"Long time, no see. We're still on for tonight, right?" Sapnap asked, directed towards the blond. George realized both Clay's and Sapnap's smiles had somewhat faltered. Looking at Clay's eyes, he could see they seemed more pained as well.

"I guess," Clay said, his voice almost *meek*. It was perhaps the most fragile George had heard of him since the boys met. George seemed to realize he was staring, so he quickly averted his gaze. Eventually, the boys made their way into the school and George headed into the bathroom stall.

He heard the door open while he was in the stall, but thought nothing of it. Afterall, it was a public bathroom.

Then, he heard a peculiar noise.

"God fucking damn it," the familiar voice said. If George wasn't mistaken, it almost sounded like ... crying?

George quietly exited his stall and knocked on the occupied one next to him.

“Are you alright?” he asked quietly.

He heard a huff before the door of the stall practically swung open. There stood Clay, practically towering over him with reddened eyes. “M’ fine,” the man huffed out, clearly purposely running into George’s shoulder as he attempted to walk out.

“Wait!” George exclaimed, moving to stand between Clay and the door.

Clay raised an annoyed-looking eyebrow. “What?” he practically spat out. His voice, however, was shaky.

“I know you like... hate me, for some reason, which is fine I guess. But, whatever’s going on, you *can* always tell me. I’m not a piece of shit, Clay. I wouldn’t make fun of you or anything,” he said, staring at Clay’s eyes for any sort of reaction.

Alas, he got none.

“Just get out of my way,” he demanded, and George, although reluctantly, obliged all the same.

this is now caught up with the last chapter

Comp Sci after that debacle in the bathroom was especially awkward, even compared to every other day. George found himself continuing to stare at the blonde man, almost entranced by him.

Why did he hate him?

He simply couldn’t shake the question out of his mind. George hadn’t done anything especially wrong, had he? He had barely even *spoken* to the guy. Was it the fact that he had caught him breaking rules a few times in the past? Quite honestly, George didn’t care. Clay being slightly “rebellious”, for lack of better word, was the least of George’s concerns.

While in class, Philza walked up to the two, a smile on his face.

“Hello, boys!” he boomed. Both he and Clay offered weak waves in response.

“I have a proposition for you all that you may be interested. I don’t know if either of you play the game ‘Minecraft,’ but I got word of a competition about a plugin challenge. Something along the lines of: ‘code a plugin that can be used for challenges with other players.’”

George felt his eyes widen. “When can I start?”

Phil chuckled a bit. “It’s actually *we* . You would be doing this in partnerships.”

George tried to ignore the annoyed scoff he heard come from Clay.

“What’s the prize?” Clay asked, sounding seemingly unconvinced about this.

Phil smiled. “That’s the best part,” he said, grinning ear-to-ear, “The prize is 5000 U.S. dollars per team!”

This seemed to interest Clay.

George was already convinced.

“I’ll let you two discuss,” Phil started, beginning to walk away. “Just let me know your decision.”

Once he was out of earshot, Clay practically grabbed the collar of his shirt and pulled it so he was facing him.

“Opinions on you aside, George, we’re winning this competition.”

George pulled back hard enough to release Clay’s grip off of his collar. “Fine with me, but please don’t do that,” he said, pointing to his collar.

Clay rolled his eyes but dropped his grip regardless.

“Do you want to work on it later today at Sapnap’s house? I’d have to make sure it’s okay but-”

“I have plans with Sapnap later tonight. He’ll be chill with me coming over to do that first.”

“Oh.”

“Oh?” Clay asked, eyebrow raised and arms crossed.

George shrugged him off and began picking up his stuff before leaving the classroom.

“By the way, George,” Clay started, voice low and raspy. “If you tell him about me fucking crying in the bathroom-” he stopped himself, “I will deadass cut you.”

George frantically nodded and exited the class.

SAPNAP

“I’m really excited for later, Clay. You’re going to have so much fun,” Sapnap said, staring at his steering wheel.

Clay seemed to nod in his peripheral vision. “Yeah, I guess so.”

“You *guess* so?”

Clay shrugged. “Yeah, man. I guess so.”

Sapnap didn’t want to pry, so simply nodded.

After a few moments of silence, Sapnap spoke up. “So... George told me you’re coming over for some coding thing before we go out?” he asked with a smirk.

Clay scoffed at this. “Trust me, it’s not because I enjoy his company or anything. There’s a five-grand cash prize.”

“Mhm...” Sapnap hummed, unconvinced. “All I’m saying is that it didn’t look like you hated him when you practically let him cuddle you while you were carrying him.”

Clay seemed to get visibly frustrated at this. “I mean this nicely, Sap, but please fuck off.”

“Whatever, dude, just know you can talk to me.”

GEORGE

George opened his locker per usual, checking for a new letter from his anonymous acquaintance becoming habitual at this point.

George began to read, feeling his brow furrow and heart shiver with empathy.

Poor Dream.

Knowing him in reality or not, hearing Dream so vulnerably explain his situation almost pained George.

Throughout the past couple of weeks or so of talking, George would admit that Dream was, albeit not incredibly close, a friend all the same.

Then, George got to the final section of the letter.

“I like guys?”

Something about this left a feeling only comparable to the connotations of fog and indecision manifest itself in George's stomach.

Frantically, he began writing.

CLAY

Through all the commotion of the day, Clay had completely forgotten to check his locker for a Gogy letter. He hoped Gogy wouldn't miss him over the weekend.

Why the fuck would he miss him? He doesn't even know him.

The boys rolled up to Sapnap's house and piled in through the doorway.

Sapnap called out saying, "George! We're here!"

George's voice was slightly muffled as he responded, as it was clouded by the walls. "I'm just getting changed. I'll be out in a sec."

Clay walked towards George's room as Sapnap put his stuff away. Clay noticed that George's door was slightly ajar. Almost instinctively, he peeked through. His breath hitched as he noticed George was shirtless. As much as Clay wanted to look away, something about the scene kept his attention. George was skinny, but lean. If Clay didn't hate him as much as he did, he would almost say he was attractive.

Clay shot up with fear as a warm hand was placed on his shoulder and chuckles echoed throughout the room.

Immediately, Sapnap watched Clay's face visibly turn red as he lurched away from the door.

"Oh my god, fucking perv!" Sapnap called out, laughing hysterically.

“Whatever, dude, I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Clay responded, trying his best to hide his blush.

“You were totally fucking staring at George shirtless, oh my god. That shit’s mad funny,” Sapnap said between wheezes.

Clay punched his shoulder jokingly, however his tone seemed to fall. “Seriously, Sap, stop.”

Sapnap’s eyes widened, most likely at the change of Clay’s tone, but he laid off. Clay sometimes felt bad; at this point, Sapnap was pretty used to Clay’s “outbursts.” It wasn’t that Clay *wanted* to snap at him, but moreso that that was the only way to get Sapnap to realize he wasn’t joking. Nevertheless, Clay admired how patient Sapnap would be with him, even when he was objectively being a dick.

Clay watched awkwardly as George walked out of his room, wearing a hoodie that looked two sizes too big for him. Clay observed how he was practically engulfed by it.

Cute .

No- not cute.

What the fuck?

It was probably just the stress getting to him.

Clay brushed away his idiotic thoughts and settled down at a table Sapnap had led him to. He watched George do the same, picking the seat farthest from his.

Good .

The boys began throwing out plugin ideas, Clay being purposefully too critical of all of George’s plans.

He couldn't help himself.

"I have another idea, if you won't fucking insult it this time," George stated.

Whoops. Maybe he had gone a bit far.

Clay motioned for George to continue.

"What about a like... 'Minecraft but The Drops Are Different,' where every time a player breaks a block, it drops a completely different item?"

Clay felt his eyes widen.

"That's not bad, actually."

George rolled his eyes. " 'Actually ,'" he mocked.

Clay and George opened Eclipse and began coding. They worked out a basic format pretty quickly, but Clay soon realized this coding job would take a *while* .

Meaning he would have to hang out with George... *again*.

Shit.

Clay and George started grinding out Javascript, practically speedrunning it. Clay felt his eyes droop from tiredness.

In a moment of desperation of sleep he called out. "I'm gonna go nap on Sapnap's couch. Don't wake me up until Sapnap says to."

George seemed surprised but nodded anyways. Clay hurried over to the couch and let sleep overtake him.

Clay was in a room, all of the figures faceless.

They were definitely people, however.

Swarms of people flooded a seemingly endless room.

Loud chatter ran through Clay's ears.

Colors and bright lights flashed across his eyes, encircling his vision.

And oh, how his eardrums rang.

More and more people swarmed in.

The endless room seemed to close in.

The noises only got louder.

Then, one of the faceless people seemed to unblur.

It was... George.

"Come with me, Clay!" he prodded, grabbing Clay's arm to pull him into the herd of people.

"No!" Clay exclaimed.

Before he could release George's grip, however, he pulled him into the raging people and the

colors of magenta and cadet blue overtook his senses.

“George, no!” Clay yelled, practically throwing himself off of the couch.

It was only a dream.

A dream where... George was there .

Clay felt his breath come out in pants.

“Oh my God, Clay, are you okay?” Clay heard George ask.

George was not who he would’ve wanted to see right now . Not after that dream.

“I’m fine,” he snapped, picking himself up from the floor.

George flinched back but nodded. “Ok. Sorry I asked. I just heard you say my name.”

I shouldn’t feel bad for snapping.

But I do.

“I’m sorry,” Clay croaked out. Even he could hear he was on the verge of tears.

“It’s okay, Clay. I’m used to it from you by now,” George said, an awkward chuckle lacing his words.

Fuck.

“I’ll be right back-” Clay started, practically speed-walking to Sapnap’s bathroom.

He slammed the door and shifted towards the sink, letting the cold water run until it could practically freeze one’s nerves before desperately splashing it onto his face in hopes of breaking whatever trance he was in.

Just as his heart rate slowed and breaths quieted, the door swung open.

Sapnap .

“Hurry up dude, get changed,” the man said, motioning towards Clay’s clothes now soaked with sink water.

“We have a party to attend to.”

Chapter End Notes

i kinda wanna keep this story more chill / low key style :) lmk your thoughts!

as always, drink some water, get some rest, and remember u are valid and loved <3

four ○ six seconds

Chapter Summary

“Clay and I are heading over to my buddy Karl’s house for a party,” he began, “And you’re joining us!”

Both the blond and the brit seemed to stop in their tracks.

“He is?!”

“I am?!”

Chapter Notes

10k words! pog!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

GEORGE

As George turned towards the bathroom, eager to see what was going on with Clay after he so irregularly ran away, he could faintly make out Sapnap’s voice.

“We have a party to attend to.”

George raised his eyebrow at this. Whether it was for him to hear or not, it intrigued him all the same. He wasn’t big for parties, per se, but he was more excited knowing he would get the house somewhat to himself without Sapnap’s loud yelling to his friends over Discord.

As much as George appreciated Sapnap’s company, he would be lying if he said he wasn’t the least bit thrilled for a night of solitude with only him and the muffled whispers of Sapnap’s parents from down the hall instead of ear-piercing shouting from the Texan’s room.

George headed towards the bathroom, watching as both Sapnap and Clay turned to him almost concurrently.

George quickly studied the two boys' faces, noticing a slight puffiness to the blond's and a concerned furrowed brow on the brunet's. Still, he dared not comment on either.

"George, perfect timing!" Sapnap called out, beckoning him and Clay out of the bathroom and into the fairly spacious hallway. Sapnap's pensive look was now replaced with a nonchalant toothy grin.

"Clay and I are heading over to my buddy Karl's house for a party," he began, "And you're joining us!"

Both the blond and the brit seemed to stop in their tracks.

"He is?-"

"I am?-"

they asked practically simultaneously.

"Yup!" Sapnap supplied, clearly excited for whatever reason.

"For fuck's sake," George heard Clay comment under his breath.

Tonight would be fun .

"With all due respect, Sapnap," George started, trying to sound as genuine as possible so there was a chance Sapnap would accept his excuse, "I have a pounding headache. I would much prefer to stay home, if I'm being completely honest."

At this, Sapnap only shook his head and snickered.

"Bullshit. You're a terrible liar by the way, George. You're not getting out of this *that* easy."

George huffed at this.

“Whatever,” Clay commented, and that was that.

George looked up in hopes of finding some sort of emotion buried under the blond’s viridian colored eyes, however Clay wouldn’t meet his gaze, thus proving his attempt futile.

“Clay,” Sarnap started, somewhat shifting the topic of conversation. The blond perked up. “Do you have a change of clothes for the party?”

The blond nodded, rubbing his back sheepishly. His face carried the same meek look he had in the parking lot when Sarnap brought up their “plans for the night,” which George now gathered was this party.

“Great,” the Texan responded, patting Clay on the back. He now turned so he was facing the two of them. “Get ready, fellas, you’re my wingmen for the night.”

The boys pulled up in Sarnap’s car to the soiree, Sarnap driving, Clay taking the passenger’s seat, and George being forced to sit in the back.

He didn’t honestly mind, however.

Whatever prevented the most conflict, the better,

Piling out of the car, the boys walked up to the porch to knock on the door.

Under the fluorescent porch lights contrasting the dark natural light of the evening, George could make out Clay’s outfit.

It was fairly basic: a black loose and unbuttoned button-up shirt atop a white mock neck and black skinny jeans. Still, it was intimidating nonetheless.

George’s own outfit was childish in comparison. He was wearing a blue crew neck with a red

Supreme logo on the front accompanied with black straight leg jeans.

Sapnap knocked on the door and the muffled sounds of music and joyful cheers became less clouded and more prominent as the door swung open.

A blondish-hazel haired boy opened the door, red solo cup in hand.

George couldn't help but snicker at his sweater of choice: the conflicting colors and abstract wavy lines looked like they were something out of a TV show. Still, he bit his tongue.

The boy's eyes seemed to light up as he recognized who was at the door.

"Sapnap!" he exclaimed, collapsing into the brunet with a tight hug.

After the two parted ways, George offered a nervous wave.

"Follow me, gang!" the sweater-man said, guiding them through the doorway and towards a couch inside.

On the way to the couch, they passed what was probably dozens of people dancing, drinking, and doing... more *uncomfortable* things, for lack of better word.

George made sure to keep his eyes on the floor as the boy directed them.

George sat next to Sapnap on the couch, who was sitting next to the sweater man. Clay was standing up, but due to his forever mundane facial expression, George couldn't tell if he minded or not.

"Ok," the man started. "I'm Karl. I already know Sapnap and Clay. You're George, right?" the boy, Karl, asked.

George nodded. "Yeah."

The boys each got situated, downing a couple of drinks each until they were somewhat-to-mildly intoxicated.

Karl giggled as he leaned past Sapnap to look at George. “So, George,” he began, “My goal today is to get each one of you a smooch.”

Sapnap audibly chuckled at his word choice, while George only forced a laugh nervously.

“I’m kidding, I’m kidding,” he clarified. “But, do you have your eye on anyone? Any girls you fancy? Or anyone else?” he added with a giggle.

George felt his cheeks warm fiercely as he noticed Clay’s gaze piercing at him out of his peripheral vision. He refused to look over, so just awkwardly hummed in response to Karl. “Yeah, I don’t know about that.”

Karl’s eyes widened. “Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to assume you-”

George smiled weakly and shook his head. “No, it’s not that. Just, to be honest, I haven’t really had the mental capacity to even think of that at the moment.”

Karl hummed understandably. “Gotcha, gotcha.” He turned to the blond standing up. “How about you, Clay? Anyone you’ve got your eye on?”

George turned to Clay, and to his discomfort, the blond’s gaze was already staring at him pointedly. His face seemed flushed, from what George assumed was the warmed and cramped atmosphere of the party.

“Is **the** Clay **blushing**?” Sapnap exclaimed, leading to a scoff from the blond.

“I think so!” Karl chided.

Clay shook his head. “As if.”

“He’s too busy making love to his skateboard to feel the touch of a woman,” a new voice added, coming from a boy walking towards them in a navy blue beanie,

“Quackmeister!” Karl exclaimed, jumping up from the couch to hug the boy.

“This is Quackity, George. George, Quackity,” Sapnap said quickly, introducing the two.

“Hi!” the man exclaimed, waving.

He seems nice enough .

George offered a light smile.

“Hello!”

After a few moments of stale silence, Karl groaned. “ *Guys* , can we *please* do something interesting?”

“Anyone interested in Spin the Bottle?” Quackity suggested loudly, leading to whoops of agreement from around the room as well as from Karl and Sapnap.

“Fuck no,” Clay said, but his usual bitter tone in front of George seemed almost resistive.

“I second that,” George added, hoping to create a sense of relatability between the two.

Sapnap’s gaze seemed to soften as he muttered something inaudible to Clay, who did the same back.

“Fine,” the blond said, and George felt his eyes widen at this change in opinion so quickly.

George rolled his eyes but joined the boys anyways. The group of five sat around, accompanied by people who introduced themselves as Alyssa, Skeppy, Wilbur, and Fundy. Along with the group were a few people George already recognized, namely Niki and Bad.

The group took turns, each of them spinning the bottle and offering sheepish and chaste kisses to the lips of the other.

George giggled as he realized it was his housemate's, Sapnap's, turn.

George watched the bottle spin, rotating for what seemed like minutes. Eventually, it paused.

The bottle landed on Karl.

Karl smiled meekly as the two stood up.

Whether from the alcohol, boredom, sheer lust, or a mix of the three, the two kissed.

For a while.

It had been probably ten seconds until the two boys finally pulled away. Less than halfway through, George had to pull his gaze off the two out of both embarrassment and social ineptness.

After a couple more spins, it was George's turn to go.

He contemplated backing out, perhaps going to the bathroom as an excuse during his turn, but he knew he would just get shit for it later from Sapnap.

George gingerly grabbed the bottle and spun it.

Moments of waiting.

Moments of anxiety.

Moments of... hope?

After the diffusive waiting, the bottle finally stopped.

On Clay.

George watched as Clay's gaze rose from the bottle to his eyes.

Slowly, both of the boys gingerly stood up.

"Fucking hell," George heard Clay mutter to himself.

"We don't have to-."

"Fuck it," the blond said, voice monotone. "I'm not a pussy."

George's eyes widened. If Clay could be impassive towards this entire ordeal, so could he.

Before he could wimp out, George slowly put a gentle hand on Clay's cheek.

"I'm sorry about this," he whispered quietly before leaning into the kiss.

Then, their lips met.

CLAY

Six seconds.

They kissed for six seconds.

Clay had been the first to pull away. He should have done it sooner.

Before he could make a snarky remark, as he always did, or perhaps flip off George, he felt a familiar hand slap his back in a brotherly fashion.

"You're down *bad*," Sapnap whispered to him, chuckling quietly so no one else could hear.

Clay rolled his eyes. “I’m not ‘down bad’,” he started, using finger quotes to emphasize “down bad.” “I’m just overwhelmed.”

Technically not a lie .

“Do you need a minute?” Sappnap asked, motioning towards the door.

Clay nodded, wordlessly exiting into the crisp evening air. Even in Florida, it was a comfortable 50 degrees fahrenheit. He revelled in the coolness as he sat on a step approaching Karl’s porch.

Clay had always been against large groups of people. It wasn’t that he was afraid of them, per se, but they were more-than-mildly uncomfortable. That, coupled with his existing internal turmoil, was a recipe for breakdown.

Perhaps that was why Clay told Gogy about his distaste for large groups: there was no responsibility or stress behind it.

Gogy was untouchable.

He had no physical interaction with Clay, nor would he, most likely, ever.

For whatever reason, Clay found solace in this.

At least Clay had alcohol in his system to dull out the effects of his stress.

In the back of his mind, Clay wondered if perhaps Gogy was in Karl’s house, at this exact party. Math wise, there was a high probability he was. Then again, he *was* interested in Minecraft and coding, and usually people like that weren’t the biggest party animals.

Then again, Clay knew he shouldn’t generalize.

The stillness in the air was interrupted by a creaking of Karl's door.

Then, footsteps.

They were light.

Graceful.

Calculated.

Then, Clay felt a brush next to his thigh.

Someone had sat next to him.

Clay focused his gaze from being randomly circled in on the steps to the figure sitting besides him.

"Hi," the voice said softly in a British accent.

Oh.

George .

"Hello," Clay responded, voice as cold as ever. It was habitual, at this point, for him to put up this phlegmatic front when in the company of George.

"I just wanted to apologize," the Brit started, sheepishly rubbing his neck. His words were slurred.

George was definitely drunk.

“The kiss thing clearly made you uncomfortable, since you came out here, and I-”

“That’s not why I’m out here, George,” Clay corrected, cutting him off. He wouldn’t meet his gaze. He didn’t want to seem any more fragile than he was already presenting himself.

“Oh,” George responded quietly. “Well I’m still sorry. I know you aren’t exactly a fan of me, so sorry about the whole ‘you have to kiss me’ thing. Also, I’m *very* drunk, if that’s any consolation,” he added with a nervous giggle.

Yeah , Clay thought to himself, *I noticed* .

Clay practically scoffed.

At least George couldn’t see past his utter bullshit.

“No need to apologize. Wasn’t your fault the bottle landed on me,” Dream responded apathetically.

“Right.”

Right .

The boys sat in silence, both eerily aware of the presence of the other next to them and completely incognizant of their opinion on them.

Minutes had passed.

Clay would know.

He was counting the seconds. 267 .

“Clay?” George asked quietly.

“What?”

The same semi-annoyed and cold tone laced his voice.

“I know I’m probably really out of it right now, because quite honestly my head is pounding right now. But, I have a question.”

“Go ahead,” Clay urged.

“Why do you hate me so much?”

Clay’s eyes widened.

What was he supposed to respond to this?

Clay groaned softly before turning to meet George’s gaze.

Their eyes met for a few moments before Clay responded. “I can’t explain, George. It wouldn’t make sense.”

George giggled at this.

Genuinely, schoolgirl-esc, *giggled* .

“You’re pretty,” George commented, voice slurred with booze and irresponsible decisions.

Clay's face instantaneously burned a furious pale vermillion.

George giggled once again.

Jesus fucking Christ .

"You're blushing!" George exclaimed sing-songy, his words stuttering from the alcohol.

"You're fucking drunk, George. Get a grip," Clay instructed, trying to keep his cool.

George laughed. "You think you're so scary, Clay! I'm not scared of you, though."

Clay let out a surprised and flustered huff.

Nothing could've prepared him for what George would say next.

"Drunk or not, you're hot as fuck," George mumbled to himself quietly.

Clay's breath hitched as he contemplated what to do next. "George, stop."

George flashed a toothy grin.

Why was he so courageous when he was blackout drunk?

"No," he retorted.

"Yes."

"No."

“Y-”

Before Clay could finish his thought, George practically grabbed Clay’s face into a kiss.

After a couple seconds, Clay forced George’s face away.

“George. You are fucking drunk. Stop.”

George seemed to sink down and finally listen after Clay rejected his embrace.

“You’re a fucking dick,” George mumbled quietly before slipping to sleep on the stairs next to Clay.

Clay, on the other hand, was not undertaken by the bliss of slumber.

He was too busy contemplating every conversation he has had with George.

Ever.

At every interaction, George just seemed scared towards it all.

Scared of him.

That was what Clay had intended, though?

GEORGE

George woke up to a freezing gust of wind hitting his face.

Slowly, he took in his surroundings.

His head was pounding, harder than it ever had before.

His stomach was tense with a feeling he couldn't quite decipher.

George turned, realizing he was on the steps to Karl's house.

He vaguely remembered coming here with Sapnap, and an annoyed Clay, but couldn't recall anything further.

Judging by what seemed to be a mix of both sweat and tear stains on his Supreme sweatshirt, he assumed it was probably for the best.

George looked at the sky, realizing it looked like mid-dusk. The sky was grey, suggesting that in a couple of hours, the sun would arise.

George begrudgingly got up, hoping to perhaps find Sapnap or Karl to give him an Advil or, even better, a ride home.

George fought his physical pain and trudged towards the kitchen.

There, the blond man he had been forced to come to the party alongside was stood.

"George?" Clay exclaimed.

In his voice was a tone George had never heard before.

Was it... *worry*?

George nodded. "What?"

Clay raised an eyebrow. He looked like he had plans for disaster in his eyes- he was the diffuser and George was a bomb. "Do you remember anything from the party? Like a couple hours ago?"

George shook his head. "No. What's it to you?" George asked, genuinely curious as to why Clay was so interested in him at this moment when they had barely exchanged conversation willingly before.

Clay sighed with what sounded like relief. "Nevermind."

With that, the blond left the kitchen, leaving George confused, in pain, and without recollection of the last night's endeavors.

Chapter End Notes

speedrunning ???

also yes. this is filled with clichés. but..... i kinda enjoyed writing this chapter! hope u enjoyed reading :)

five ○ an anomaly

Chapter Notes

AHHASJDK I AM SO SORRY THIS 1) TOOK SO LONG TO GET OUT AND 2) IS SO SHORT

i have been so swamped with work and shit but updates will hopefully(?) be longer / more frequent!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

CLAY

Clay had always been a *weed* person.

He would, on occasion, smoke every now and then.

He was much less, however, an *alcohol* person.

Realizing that George had no recollection of their admittedly strange interaction the Friday prior hadn't changed his opinion on this.

Clay, the day following, had a mind-numbing headache, however he paid it no thought. The painful buzz of his thoughts were a sufficient enough distraction from the pain.

Clay couldn't help but question how he truly felt about George forgetting what he had done.

What he had said .

“ Drunk or not, you're hot as fuck.”

George's words seeped like a cool venom into Clay's brain.

It was a painful feeling Clay could, unfortunately, pinpoint.

He would not give his subconscious the satisfaction of acknowledging it.

He could hate George. He could hate the way his words acted like a match, igniting burns and frying his skin. He could hate his caliginous, dark eyes. He could hate his milky, olive-tinted skin.

He could hate him.

So, why didn't he?

Now, it was Monday, and Clay was less-than-enthused to be in the company of the annoyingly attendant brunet.

Clay rode his skateboard into the school parking lot, his white wheels creating a static white noise against the chipped pavement.

Clay stomped on the front tail of the board, letting it fly up into his hand as he walked into the school.

Almost instinctively, Clay headed towards his locker.

After unlocking it, the door swung open.

There laid a note written in magenta ink.

Clay quickly remembered what he had written in the last letter to Gogy as the mystery-man's words registered in his brain.

—

Hi Dream, it's Gogy :)

1. *I'm really honored you trust me enough to confide in me with something like that.*
2. *I totally get not liking large groups of people. I feel the same. I would much rather stay home and play minecraft :)*
3. *As for liking guys in general, I've been there.*

Or, I am there, rather.

I'm kinda new here, so I really have had no reason or opportunity to formally "come out," but at my old school I did and I completely get being nervous / scared about something like that!! Just take your time and remember, no rush!

(I guess I should add I am gay, if that wasn't obvious lol. I would've written this earlier but I can't erase since I'm writing this in pen... whoops.)

Anyways, it's cool to know that you and I have yet another thing in common.

Maybe you were right that we are soulmates HAHAHA

Now, if you don't wanna say that's completely fine! But, is there a certain guy who brought you to this conclusion? ;) I live for drama.

Stay safe, Dream.

-Gogy

Well, shit.

Clay smiled despite himself.

He couldn't help but notice a feeling of contentment developing in his chest as he read about the growing list of similarities between the two boys.

Clay could admit, regardless of his preferred anonymity, he was rather curious about who Gogy was.

Was it someone he knew?

No , he reminded himself, *he would have recognized the locker number if it was* .

Still, something about Gogy almost felt familiar.

He then began writing.

Clay walked into his Computer Science class only to be met with George already seated at his normal chair.

Clay slid into his seat without a word, already opening his laptop to open Eclipse in order to continue development on their Minecraft code.

In order to dissipate the feelings of stress further fueled by the ever-uncomfortable silence between the two boys, Clay put his headphones in and pressed “Shuffle” on his Spotify playlist.

The opening notes of “505” by Arctic Monkeys, arguably one of the more popular songs on Clay’s playlist, began humming through his ears.

After a couple of minutes, George tapped him lightly on the shoulder. In response, Clay pulled out an earbud and raised an annoyed eyebrow.

“What is it?” he asked indifferently, trying and succeeding to mask any substantial curiosity he may or may not have had for George’s upcoming point.

“Sorry,” George started, not even attempting to meet Clay’s piercing eye contact, “I just wanted to let you know your earbud volume is pretty loud.”

Clay rolled his eyes before George could continue.

“-Not that I care, of course,” he began, “-but you’ve been getting rather peeved looks from other classmates.”

Clay barely had to think before he replied.

“Okay? Fuck ‘em.”

With that, he contentedly plugged his earbud back in, trying to hide the smirk that formed on his face as he noticed George’s taken aback expression from his peripheral vision.

Just for the fun of it, Clay turned the volume up another level.

GEORGE

George couldn’t lie and say that the entire idea of Clay didn’t intrigue him.

Ninety-nine percent of the time, Clay would treat George as if he was some parasite, desperately trying to rid himself of his existence.

The other one percent, however, it almost seemed as if he enjoyed George’s company.

Clay was an anomaly.

George chuckled lightly to himself over Clay’s choice in music (he could quite clearly hear the

Arctic Monkeys from Clay's obnoxiously loud earbuds) as he walked to his locker.

Like always, there was a letter waiting for him.

My Dearest Gogy,

THANK GOD (thank god-y? gogy? godgy???) THAT YOU ARE COOL WITH ME.

Well, I guess we are the same person, so it would be strange if you weren't. Anyways, thanks for your advice. Jokes aside, I appreciate it a lot :)

To answer your question, if there is a specific guy, yes... (?)

Obviously, it is...

You!

(/j. Sorry for the rejection, Gogy. Simply too soon)

But yeah HAHA, I honestly am not sure how I feel about this guy. GOD, life is so confusing.

Also... I have a proposition. You CAN say no.

Minecraft together sometime?

-*Dweam*

George rolled his eyes, first at the bluntness of the man, and then at the embarrassment of a sign off.

“*Dweam.*”

Despite only talking to this unknown person for a few weeks, George was quick to recognize that that response was just so incredibly *Dream*.

George chuckled to himself as he performed his usual ritual of pulling out paper and his magenta pen.

Like always, he let his brain overtake his hand as he wrote to the infamous “Dream,” a person he had never met, seen, talked to, or even knew their name, and yet felt as if he *knew* him.

Perhaps, George enjoyed talking to Dream.

Perhaps, he wanted to know more about him.

But, he reminded himself, anonymity must stay anonymous.

Chapter End Notes

okay so... i may or may not have started writing this sad and angsty fic and OH MY GOD once i eventually finish this story i have so many ideas.... ok thats it LMAO just thought id share.

that being said, in the next like day or so after this update I will be posting another

chapter that is a collection of letters! a little different than the usual chapters but i think
itll be fun!

six ○ letters between two

Chapter Summary

a collection of letters between george (gogy) and clay (dream)

Chapter Notes

hope u enjoy!!

Helloooooo Dream,

1. *Ouch. I can't believe you friendzoned me like that (/j HAHHA)*
2. *That is an admittedly intriguing proposition.*

*Minecraft? With **the** Dream? No way.*

I will have to think ... hmmmmmm...

Actually... maybe not... My IGN has my real name in it, and I refuse to reveal myself just yet.

Perhaps in another lifetime, my undisclosed epistolary friend.

Other proposition:

What if we potentially exchanged like ... Discords? Just so we don't have to wait a whole day for correspondence.

Plus, perhaps we will be able to talk on weekends as well!

If not, that's cool too :) Whatever you're comfortable with dude!

Sorry... Went off on a tangent in this letter but can't erase... ㄒ(͜)ㄒ oops!

Signed,

- Gogy

Gogy, gogy, gogy.

Tsk tsk tsk.

*You are so desperate to talk to me that you need my Discord, huh? What a simp. (This a joke btw ;)
)*

But yeah, it may be too soon for a Discord... I enjoy the thrill of opening my locker each time and finding a Gogy letter :D

Also... about Minecraft.

I have a solution.

I may be leaving a small ... gift ... in your locker to cover the price of an alt account for minecraft so we can play together :)) (consider this \$30 a thank you for the advice you gave me earlier :))

I will continue to think about the Discord...

...

..

...

*Ok I thought about it. My answer is... **maybe** .*

Jokes aside, it's been really cool getting to know you over these past couple of weeks, Gogy. I am now considering you my advice man. I hope you know that you are now my personal therapist. Hopefully I can help you too :)

But, I feel like we don't know that much about each other. So... favorite color. Go!

I look forward to further correspondence with you as well, Mr. Gogy.

Have a good day!

- Dream

Hey Dream,

I can't believe you called me desperate. If I am your therapist, I think I will be letting you go as a client now. Find another anonymous coding guy to chat with.

Jokes aside, I can't believe you left me \$30. What the hell?? You did not have to do that ... but since you did... I guess I have no choice but to play with you.

Admittedly, however, it's going to be incredibly difficult to dictate where and when we are playing if we can only communicate through letters.

Just saying, I think my Discord idea was good.

You're simply just an idiot, I guess. ;)

Anywaysss... my favorite color is blue. I am colorblind though, so who the fuck knows. Pretty rude of you to ask that smh. (KIDDING KIDDING)

Let me know when you come to your senses about the Discord. Unlike Minecraft, you can make a Discord alt for free :D

My turn to ask you a question: Favorite hobby (besides coding and Minecraft :P) ?

I look forward to your response, Dream.

Have a good day <3

- Gogy

Hi Gogy!

*I couldn't help but notice you using a "<3" last letter... Maybe you really **are** a simp for me. I can't blame you, though. Even anonymous, I am quite irresistible.*

About my favorite hobby, quite honestly, I am insulted. You think coding and Minecraft are my favorite things to do? I am no nerd smh...

I like skateboarding a lot! I go out a lot with my friends- it's very therapeutic :D

Actually... I guess Minecraft is pretty cool too... (shit maybe I am a nerd...)

You bring up a good point about the Discord.

Fuck. I can't believe I've been bested by someone who is literally named GOGY. This is honestly so embarrassing for me. Going dark, don't hit me up. Only the real ones know.

I guess, if you drop your Discord tag, eventually I may add you.

Emphasis on MAY.

Also... HAHAAH COLORBLIND HAHAAHA (sorry I'll stop. For now.)

Now, Gogy, time to test how pretentious you are.

What's your favorite movie?

I look forward to your response.

- Dream

Hi Dream.

Fuck you :)

I may be colorblind but that doesn't mean I can't fucking kick your ass.

But... skateboarding is pretty cool, so at least I'll give you that. I have a friend who skateboards, but he's pretty shit. Hopefully, you're better than him. The next time I go to the skatepark with him again, if I see a man in an Arctic Monkeys shirt who looks like a complete nerd, I'll know who I need to throw hands with.

Also, I can't believe you are making fun of the name Gogy when you were literally the one to come up with it. Self-loathing at its finest... sad.

The "<3" was platonically, by the way.

Idk if I could even stand for being FRIENDS with you, though, Dream. You are just too annoying to bear.

My favorite movie is ...

Don't laugh

The Dead Poets Society.

I guess I am pretty pretentious, but what can I say, I'm a sucker for an angsty dark academia film.

My turn to inquire...

Tell me about yourself.

The basics, of course. Nothing that would give u away ;)

Cya Dream,

- gogy

(my alt discord tag is gogy#0123 btw when you cave in and add me... yes i did just make this lol)

O Gogy! My Gogy!

I am hoping you caught that Dead Poets Society reference, or this will be very awkward. But yes, great movie- probably one of my top 5 :D

One day I will add you on Discord...

One day...

Also, I DOUBT you could kick my ass. How tall are you? 5'9? 5'10?

I'm 6'3 bitch B) FEAR ME!

Also, not to brag, but I think I'm pretty good at skateboarding. Sorry to your friend, but I'm probably better than him ;)

It's weird to think that you have gone to the skatepark with your friend before... Perhaps we have crossed paths. Damn... that's so weird thinking that theoretically we may know each other.

Also... a platonic "<3"... does this mean we're friends :DDDD

I knew you loved me, Gogy. Less than a month of talking and you've already fallen for me, geez. I can't be surprised, though. Happens to the best of us.

As for a basic description...

Hmmm... I can't make it too obvious...

I am 6'3. I'd like to think I'm (kinda? honestly who the hell knows) built. I have hair that is on the lighter side. But, I do have a size 14 shoe size.

I am simply too cool.

My turn to ask a question!!!

What's your current favorite song :P

- dream >:)

Hey Dream,

*Yes, I got the reference. You got a small laugh out of me. Emphasis on **small** .*

Holy shit, you're tall.

Also, I'm not 5'10... Not 5'9... but 5'7. But, to you, we'll say 5'8 because I refuse to be more than 7 inches shorter than anyone.

I doubt we've met before, honestly. I've only been to the skatepark with him once, and even then, there was only one person there. Guess I'll have to go more often now ;0 .. plus anyways, I am completely and totally introverted. If I don't know you, I definitely haven't talked to you, even with simple small talk.

Going back to your earlier question, I'd like to think we're friends.

Considering you've ranted to me on numerous occasions, I think I deserve a title past just an anonymous acquaintance.

You have a chance to ask a question, and you ask for a song recommendation? Sad.

What do I look like, your Spotify Discover Weekly?

Jokes aside, my current favorite song is probably Pretty Girl by Clairo.

If you insult me for that, I will quite literally kick you.

Until next time Dream,

- Gogy

Hello Sir Gogy, my liege,

I will not insult you for Clairo. That song goes so hard, I don't care.

Also, yes, you do look like my Discover Weekly, thanks for asking.

And... FRIENDS! ;DDDD

You're a cool friend, Gogy :)

... but... 5'7 LMAOOOO I COULD LITERALLY FIT MY HEAD OVER YOURS

haha short

Yes, definitely come to the skatepark. Perhaps we will have a movie moment where you see a light-haired 6'3 man and we lock eyes, realize who each other are, and then make out.

It's admittedly strange to hear you're an introvert considering how u talk to me.

You act like we've known each other for months (which is chill since I talk the same way! I just wouldn't expect that from an introvert :P)

QUESTION TIME!

What's your favorite childhood memory :D I want to hear about toddler Gogy.

Signed, your favorite tall boy,

- Dream

Helloooo Dream,

Glad you are also a Clairo fan. If you weren't, I don't think we could've been friends anymore.

I'm not short btw, I'm average.

The next time I go to the skatepark, in case we do magically end up having a movie moment, I'll make sure to wear a camera-ready outfit, bring good lighting, and have a video camera at the ready.

I don't know about making out, though...

Perhaps a quick hug..

Also, idk, you're just easy to talk to.

I'm sure it's 50% that you're a genuine idiot who has no sense of what is appropriate to say and 50% the fact I have no idea who you are, but I'm pretty chill when I talk to you.

Hmmm... my favorite childhood memory...

I have a distinct memory of five year old me riding a horse and being bucked off so forcefully I broke my arm...

Can't say that exactly was my "favorite," though.. I did get ice cream afterwards, however, so I guess it was pretty neutral. Five year old me was easy to please.

Since you chose a deeper question, I will too. Tell me about what your family is like :) (if you're comfortable, of course! If not, that's ok too!)

Until next time Dreamie,

- Gogy

seven ○ a favor

Chapter Summary

Clay was growing increasingly aware of just how close he and the anonymous boy had gotten over the past couple of months.

And, with this newfound friendship between the two, with every letter he found himself more and more interested as to who Gogy truly was.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

CLAY

Clay found himself rereading Gogy's rather bold signoff.

"Until next time Dreamie,"

Clay giggled despite himself, growing increasingly aware of just how close he and the anonymous boy had gotten over the past couple of months.

And, with this newfound friendship between the two, with every letter he found himself more and more interested as to who Gogy truly was.

They didn't formally know each other, of that Clay was certain. Clay knew no one who had locker 404.

Theoretically, if he wanted to, Clay could easily wait inconspicuously across from the locker until he saw someone open it. Or, he could check the student directory to see who owned it. Or, he could simply *ask*.

But, quite honestly, he didn't want to.

Especially if that meant, firstly, betraying Gogy's trust, and secondly, revealing himself.

It wasn't that Clay was ashamed of his real-life identity. In fact, he was far from it. Clay had himself a fairly bold reputation. He was considered the stereotypical loner-skateboard boy. Regardless of his job leading the coding club, he had never gained a title of "nerd" or "math whiz." Instead, he was considered one of the "cool guys," easily obtaining things such as drugs and alcohol and even more easily obtaining women. Clay had probably had five girlfriends in the past, however none were especially memorable nor meaningful to him. In fact, he found his past relationships to be rather taxing and exigent.

All of them ended up going the same way:

Clay is doing something or other, an objectively hot girl goes up to ask him out, and he agrees because he feels bad rejecting them. Then, after weeks, or, sometimes months, he eventually breaks it off.

In short, his reputation preceded him.

If Gogy knew *of* him, which knowing their school, he probably did, his opinion of Clay was probably one of intimidation.

Clay could admit, he was *different* when speaking to Gogy. Something about the man put his mind at ease, and allowed for him to speak openly and honestly. Because of this, he found solace in him and his letters. Revealing himself would only tarnish this.

After getting lost in thought, Clay began to write.

Gogy

Gogy

Gogy

You called me Dreamie ;) that's cute <33

I enjoy this nickname, I cannot lie.

About your favorite childhood memory...

Not gonna lie, seems pretty shitty.

Ice cream is cool though, but I'm not sure if it's worth a broken arm.

Now... about my family (don't worry! I'm comfortable talking about them :D)

I have two sisters, one older and one younger.

My younger sister is named Drista (which is actually heavily ironic in this situation considering you call me Dream and Drista kinda sounds like Dream-sister) and my older is called Alice :) They're super chill. My sisters like to bully me too, so maybe you guys would have something in common.

Question for Gogy time:

Favorite book series. (I will judge you so hard based on your answer, btw, be warned)

Looking forward to your response, Gogman.

- Dreamie

Eventually, Clay got through the school day and heard a familiar notification sound buzz from his phone.

2 New Messages From: Sapnap

Clay tapped the notification, watching as his phone opened the Messages app. There, he read what

his best friend had written for him.

sappynappy: Ayoooo Clay - I know u probably know already (unless ur a dumbass LMFAO) but this upcoming saturday is Halloween and me and Karl were already planning on hanging

Quite honestly, Clay *had* forgotten about Halloween. The stress from George while being preoccupied with Gogy had limited his time focusing on trivial holidays.

Then, he realized:

Karl, as in Karl from the party .

The party where George had called him “hot as fuck.”

Clay forced his mind to distance himself from that thought as he continued reading Sapnap’s messages.

sappynappy: I may have a favor to ask..... please just consider it and don’t murder me

Clay rolled his eyes at Sapnap’s attempt to guilt him into doing whatever he had planned. Clay typed a quick response back.

Clay: ughhhhh what is it

just spit it out smh

Clay watched as the grey typing bubble continuously appeared, disappeared, and then reappeared. After what felt like minutes of waiting, his phone buzzed once again.

sappynappy: Since I’m gonna be out ... I really am not supposed to abandon George on Halloween according to my parents. They say it would be rude of me as a host .

Clay visibly rolled his eyes.

Clay: bruh idk??? just take him where you're taking karl??

Grey dots.

sappynappy: Can't.

Clay: WHY?

Grey dots once again.

sappynappy: Call???

Plz

Clay groaned and hit the *dial* button.

Clay hopped on his board and began riding away from school as the dial tone rang several times. After around 5 cycles, it stopped, signalling Sapnap had picked up.

Clay waited for Sapnap to speak up.

He didn't.

"Hello?" Clay asked into his phone, breaking the silence.

He could vaguely make out a relieved tone across the line.

"You're not with anyone, right?" Sapnap asked through the speaker.

“No,” Clay replied back, “I’m just skating home.”

Sapnap hummed understandingly before sighing.

“If I tell you what I’m about to tell you, do you promise not to tell another single fucking person?”

“Course, dude.”

“I can’t bring George, because I’m going on a date with Karl on Halloween.”

Clay felt his eyes widen.

“Oh, I didn’t know you-”

“Yeah,” Sapnap replied sheepishly, *“We’ve kinda been talking for like a month now.”*

“Well congrats dude,” Clay started, “That’s awesome. Now, what do you need from me?”

Sapnap sighed. *“This is the hard part. Don’t kill me.”*

“Just spit it out, Sap.”

“I need you to hang out with George on Halloween.”

Clay laughed sardonically. “Are you *kidding* me, dude? Why would I ever agree to this?”

“Because!” Sapnap started, voice almost pleading, *“I’ll owe you big time!”*

Clay scoffed. "I hate you."

"*Plus,*" Sapnap continued, "*You'll get to spend time with George.*"

"Yeah," Clay asked, confused. "That's the issue?"

Sapnap laughed dryly over the phone. "*Whatever, dude, just please say you'll do it?*"

Clay shook his head and groaned as he turned onto the street where his house was. "Fine, but you fucking owe me."

GEORGE

George mindlessly wandered his room, admiring the posters he had put up only a few days ago.

The once blank and stark walls were now adorned with memorabilia of his favorite bands, video games, films, and pictures. It finally felt like *his* room. He was finally finding comfort in Florida.

George was pulled out of his thoughts as he heard a soft knock at the door.

"Come in!" he called out, collapsing onto his bed as he waited for the person at the doorway to enter.

As he turned on his bed to face the door, he was met with Sapnap standing awkwardly. He seemed almost nervous.

"What's up?" George asked gingerly, looking up at the brunet.

"I just wanted to let you know that on Saturday, on Halloween, I'm going to be out."

George nodded and shrugged. “Well, thanks for the heads up!” he called out, returning his gaze to the rest of the room.

“Well, that’s not *it* exactly. My parents said you couldn’t be home alone, so-”

“Do I have to come with you?” George interrupted with a raised brow.

Sapnap shook his head. “No, you’ll be staying here. One of my friends will be chilling here babysitting you so I don’t get in trouble.”

George shot him a scowl. “For fuck’s sake,” he groaned. George sighed annoyedly before continuing. “Which friend is it, anyways?”

“Not telling.”

George groaned in complaint once again. “Sapnap, you are so annoying.”

Sapnap grinned obnoxiously. “I know!”

With that, the brunet waved and left George’s room, leaving George bewildered and confused.

George snapped out of his thoughts when his phone buzzed, along with a familiar notification sound.

1 Discord Notification

George quickly clicked it, only to be met with another alert.

Dream#XXXX has sent you a friend request

George felt his breath hitch in his throat, having had completely not expected for Dream to actually commit to adding him on Discord.

George wasted no time accepting the request.

George couldn't help but snicker at the mystery-man's profile picture. It was a poorly drawn white blob with a black smile and a lime green background.

Quickly, George realized he had never given *himself* a profile picture. He hastily opened his computer and opened photoshop, making a "G" symbol out of 45° pale-blue lines. It was basic, but good enough that it would be easily distinguishable as his "Gogy" account.

George uploaded it to Discord, and soon opened a DM with Dream.

***gogy:** haha u caved and added me >:)))*

Dream replied almost instantly.

***dream:** don't flatter yourself*

this is for minecraft, not you

George giggled to himself. It was strange, but oddly exciting being able to speak with Dream instantly instead of having multiple-hour intervals between each message. Still, he was delighted to see Dream texted the same way he wrote: annoyingly snarky.

***gogy:** sureeee sureeee..... nice pfp.. what, did you make it on microsoft paint? LOL*

***dream:**perhaps.....*

George felt himself verbally laugh, Dream's online persona and his getting along surprisingly similar compared to their literary ones.

***dream:** btw - you better not stop writing me physical letters, gogy. you are the shakespeare of our time*

***gogy:** of course not. I would never deprive the world of my epic writing stylings :]*

George waited for a moment or two before Dream finally responded.

dream: its super cool talking w u but i gotta go to dinner gogy :) talk to u later!! :)

gogy: bye dream :]

George could admit, it was nice talking to Dream more directly.

It felt like they were actually *friends* .

...

Friends who had never met.

Friends who had never seen each other.

Friends who didn't know each other's names.

Still, *friends* .

Chapter End Notes

hope u enjoyed :D

eight ○ neutrality

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

CLAY

It was 4 in the morning.

Usually, Clay found himself pushing his friends to join him skateboarding at this hour, unwilling to spend time alone so early in the day.

Today, however, all he wanted to do was be in solitude.

Clay mindlessly skated around the park, bored with both himself and his tricks.

In short, he felt almost trapped.

Every night, he would sneak out at the same time, go to the same place, and land the same tricks. Even skating, what he felt as his method of escapism, was beginning to feel monotonous.

That is, until he heard a familiar noise buzz from his phone.

1 Discord Notification

Clay raised an eyebrow, unsure as to who would be texting him at such an hour.

***gogy:** hi dream ahahah sorry its so late and ur def asleep but i heard a song and i like it so i am now forcing you to listen to it. when u wake up ofc ;)*

https://open.spotify.com/track/3cr3oAP4bQFNjZBV7ElKaB?si=iANljkXOT-qNdb_egTOMlg

Clay giggled to himself at the thought believing he had a semi-healthy sleep schedule before

clicking on the link attached.

Clay plugged his headphones in and hit play before he continued to skate.

Now Playing: I Know The End - Phoebe Bridgers

It was, at first, not his thing per se.

Skating to it almost felt trivial; the song was, towards the beginning, slow, somber, and all-around melancholy.

However, after a few moments, Clay found himself, in quite honesty, enjoying the song.

Now, the beat had dropped- trumpets were blaring through his ears, and drums were booming. Clay's first instinct was to unplug his headphones and set his phone down so he could listen to it blast through the skatepark.

The second half of the song roared through the concrete-covered grounds, accompanying Clay's skating with motifs of power and what could only be described as bitter nostalgia.

Clay continued skating to the song, landing tricks as perfectly as he always seemed to.

Then, he was met with a cough.

Quickly, Clay stopped his board and turned to where the noise had come from.

Sure enough, he was met with a 5'7 brunet boy with widened brown eyes staring back at him. Under the moonlight as their only source of light, his skin looked almost ghostly.

“Clay?” the boy asked quietly, staring at him with an unreadable look.

Clay, albeit barely, fought back the urge to roll his eyes. “Why are you here, George? Since when do you skate?” he asked, colder than he had intended.

George shook his head, scoffing lightly. “I was just on a walk through the neighbourhood-”

“At 4 am?” Clay interrupted.

George nodded before continuing. “*Anyways*, ” he began again, “I was on a walk through Sapnap’s neighbourhood when I heard the.. *um* ... song you were playing from a few blocks away. So, I walked over towards here out of curiosity.” He sounded, at least to Clay, almost nervous.

At this, Clay felt a rush of embarrassment wash through him. “Whatever, man, not *my* music. A friend sent it to me.”

George raised an eyebrow but seemed to accept that as an answer. “Oh, well sorry for bothering you,” he retreated, walking to exit the skatepark.

“Wait- George!” Clay called out before he could leave.

George turned around. If Clay was paying attention, which he was, he noticed that his eyes seemed almost eager. “Yes, Clay?”

“Just letting you know that we have to work on the coding thing later today. If we have to, we can do it at my house, just don’t miss it.”

George seemed almost *disappointed* , but nodded all the same. “Yeah, sure.”

With that, George left, and the boys parted ways.

Clay hated how *agitated* he sounded towards George.

At the same time, however, he relished in it.

Keeping up the facade that he absolutely hated George was, in a word, difficult, but he did it all the same. His disappointment, however, was hard to ignore. Every time Clay would be just a little too mean-spirited, he would notice the look of genuine dolor on George's face.

Why, even after all of this, did George care about how Clay treated him?

His thoughts jumbled in his mind, Clay decided he didn't want to skate anymore.

He headed home, confusion lacing his brain and the song Gogy had suggested blasting in his ears.

GEORGE

George walked back to Sapnap's house, trying to quietly open the door so that no one would wake at his arrival.

His plan was interrupted, however, when he opened the door to reveal Sapnap standing with his arms crossed and brow furrowed.

"What the *hell* , George?" Sapnap exclaimed, dropping his arms to accentuate his surprise.

"What?"

Sapnap rolled his eyes. "It's like 4:30 am, George, what do you mean *what* ?"

"Oh."

"Yeah, oh. Text me next time please. Where were you, anyways?" he exclaimed, however his voice was matched with concern rather than bitterness.

George shook his head in embarrassment. “I went on a walk.”

Sapnap raised a brow, seemingly not believing him, but didn’t pry any longer.

“Whatever, just go back to bed.”

It was 6:53 AM, and George woke to a Discord notification.

***dream:** bruhhhh that song?? is so good????*

George laughed, happy that this mysterious friend enjoyed his music recommendations.

***gogy:** YAY you liked it :] btw now u owe me a song recommendation. i expect one by the end of the day today.*

***dream:** you got it bby <3*

George felt his face warm at the sudden change in tone in Dream’s messages.

***gogy:** SIMP!!!*

***dream:** true ;)*

,

It was strange texting with Dream.

He didn’t have experience chatting with someone so jokingly flirty and affectionate. It wasn’t that he minded, however. It was more just unfamiliar.

George got dressed, putting on a simple dark blue sweater and black ripped jeans, accompanied by his black converse.

He packed into Sapnap's car, tapping absentmindedly on the window as he waited for his friend to join him in the vehicle.

Inattentively, George found himself opening Spotify and pressing play on the same song he had sent Dream only hours ago.

SAPNAP

After arriving at school, and greeting his friends, Sapnap eventually headed towards his first class.

Sapnap waved lightly at his friend, Karl, whom he shared first period with.

"Hey, Sap!" the boy called out, grinning brightly at him.

Sapnap pulled out his chair from next to him, greeting him back. "'Sup, Karl."

Karl giggled lightly, and it sent a wave of warmth through Sapnap's skin. "Nothin' much."

Sapnap smiled before he jumped at the sound of a text notification. Sapnap held up a finger to Karl, signalling that he needed a moment. The other boy nodded.

Sapnap raised a brow at the message.

Clay: lmaoo were u the reason george walked to the skate park

Sapnap scoffed lightly, realizing George had left out crucial information when he described why he went out that morning.

Sapnap: wdym.. He told me he just went for a walk..

Grey ellipses popped up on screen before another message went through.

Clay: idk man i was skating and he just kinda showed up.. Mans needs a bell or something

Sapnap snickered before tilting his screen towards Karl before reading the messages.

Karl chuckled lightly in response. “What is going *on* between those two?”

Sapnap laughed and shook his head. “God, I have no fucking clue.”

GEORGE

George couldn't help but think back to his strange interaction with Clay that morning.

Clay seemed, at least to him, a lot less *hostile* .

As always, George walked to his locker and unlocked it, Clay still on his mind.

George read the expected letter from Dream, as he always did, and began writing.

Helloooo Dream,

Don't flatter yourself with the "Dreamie" thing. Never again.

Also, It's been nice being able to talk to you via text, but nothing will be able to beat our epic literary conversations :]

Anyways.. You asked what my favorite book series is.

Don't laugh... but Harry Potter.

As a kid, I was a huge Harry Potter fan, and I guess I never grew out of it. I'm a Ravenclaw, and judging by your... concerning... behavior, I'm guessing you're a Slytherin.

Hmm... let's think of a question...

Okay Dream. My question: What's your worst habit :)

As always,

the man you simp for,

- Gogy :)

George eventually got to his Comp Sci class, sitting next to Clay as he always did.

The boys eventually got to coding before George spoke up.

"So, what's the deal for later?"

Clay turned to him, a brow raised. "What's later?"

George furrowed his brow. “Earlier you said we had to work on coding?”

Clay looked like he was stuck in thought for a few moments before a wave of realization set in. “Oh, okay. I guess you’ll have to come to my place. I’ll give you my address, I guess.”

George watched as Clay pulled out a sticky note and scribbled out where he lived.

It was strange, but Clay seemed almost *neutral* towards George.

What had changed?

Chapter End Notes

might end up editing this chapter post - upload lol we shall see... hope u enjoy

hi! if youre reading this... just wanted to let you know ill be updating hopefully by tomorrow night! ive just been swamped recently :P

nine ○ a confessional

Chapter Notes

sorry this update took so long! been v busy :) tysm for 3k hits by the way <3 all the comments, kudos, and wtv are so appreciated. love u all

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

CLAY

Clay strode to his locker, looking absentmindedly for the letter he knew would be there.

The name Gogy, as always, was sprawled at the bottom in magenta ink. Clay found himself finding comfort in the violaceous colour.

Clay's eyes skimmed over it.

It was becoming a habit of the boys to each take turns asking a question, them both silently but mutually accepting that it was the other's turn to inquire about whatever they saw fitting.

Then, as always, Clay wrote out a response.

Heyyyy Gogs,

I have to agree with you, Harry Potter is pretty cool.

Yes, actually I am a Slytherin, for your information. Sorry you're too LAME to be part of the cool kids gang. Haha nerd.

I am personally partial to Percy Jackson, however, compared to Harry Potter.

If you were in the PJ universe, your godly parent would probably be...hmmm... Hera. One, 'cause she's hot. Two, she's a bitch.

Jokes aside, you're pretty cool Gogy.

Now, for your question: my worst habit.

I have a pretty shit sleep schedule, if that counts. I tend to wake up at like 4 am to skateboard ... I am truly going to die over how exhausted I am lol.

Question for you (which is kinda pushy! Don't answer if ya don't want to :)) -> Would you ever want to reveal our identities? Like, as a sort of unmasking type deal ;)

Have a good day as always, Gogy,

- Dream

(p.s. you were right in your last letter, you are the man I simp for ;))

Clay giggled to himself as he walked to Gogy's locker.

Immediately, upon entering the hall, he was met with George exiting it. Clay quickly stuffed his letter in his pocket as George approached him in the doorway.

"Sorry about that," George said, laughing awkwardly.

Clay waved him off, too exhausted and impassive to argue with George today. "No worries, see you later for the coding thing."

George nodded back and passed him, leaving the hallway where Clay was entering to deliver

Gogy's letter.

Clay slipped the note through the vents in the locker, the familiar *clunk* of the paper hitting the bottom of the locker signifying it was his cue to leave.

When he returned to his classes, Clay couldn't help but recognize the irony that he bumped into George while delivering Gogy's letter. The boy and the mystery man seemed so similar, yet so different; where George was soft spoken and outright cowardly, Gogy was opinionated and rash.

Two opposites, yet nearly identical.

How strange.

GEORGE

George walked to Clay's house, a strange mix of anxiety and disquietude manifesting itself in his stomach.

The past few interactions he had had with Clay, he was unusually passive. In the hallway, he hadn't even reprimanded him for almost walking into him. George couldn't tell if these were one-off situations, or, after a couple months, Clay was finally warming up to him.

George double checked the note where Clay's address was written to guarantee he was in the right area when he heard a *ping* ring out from his phone.

George nonchalantly opened the notification, finding a Discord text from Dream.

dream: *heyyy goggyyyyy ok so about that song suggestion...*

George giggled to himself, Dream's personality continuing to shine through even his most mundane texts.

gogy: what about it?

dream: I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING, that's what about it >:(

gogy: sounds like a you problem... clock is ticking btw.

dream: you are making it so difficult to simp for you

gogy: :]

Looking up from his phone, George gazed at the distant houses on the street until he could vaguely make out the house number that Clay had given him.

Instinctively, he began to walk more swiftly as he approached Clay's house.

It was a similar size to Sapnap's, a very stereotypical American townhome, just as he had expected.

Anxiety quickly filling his chest, he reluctantly walked on the stone path through the front yard to the door.

George barely had knocked twice before the door swung open, revealing a young-looking blonde girl who was almost his height.

"Who the hell are you?" the girl asked, voice laced with curiosity rather than malice.

"George," the brunet started, rubbing the back of his neck sheepishly, "I'm here to work on a... um, coding thing with Clay."

The girl nodded before reaching out her hand. George cautiously took it. "Drista," she introduced.

George felt his eyes narrow.

Drista .

That name was definitely familiar, but he wasn't sure from where exactly. Perhaps Clay had mentioned his sister's name in the past.

George followed as Drista motioned for him to walk through the doorway. After a couple seconds of walking, he was led face-to-face with a white door.

George knocked and heard a muffled voice of Clay's as the door knob turned.

"Wow, Dris, you finally learned to knock."

As the door opened, it revealed a disheveled and exhausted-looking Clay.

Clay flinched back, clearly surprised George wasn't the blond sister he was expecting. "Oh, George."

George waved sheepishly as Clay motioned for him to enter the door.

The boys unpacked, beginning to code as they always did.

They exchanged painfully bland conversation as they typed away in Eclipse, the boys progressing slowly but steadily nonetheless.

Eventually, Clay broke the thick silence and cleared his throat.

Surprised, George looked up from his screen and turned to the blond. "Yeah?"

To George, Clay seemed almost... *nervous* , perhaps? His hands were fidgeting next to his

keyboard as he hummed contemplatively.

“This is a really strange question,” he began.

George nodded for him to continue.

“But you know that other day, when you said you recognized that song I was listening to?”

George thought back to the early morning when he had walked into the skatepark to find Clay listening to “I Know The End,” by Phoebe Bridgers. Judging by Clay’s darker aesthetic and cold attitude, it was no surprise that the song was recommended by his friend and he wasn’t listening to it on his own volition.

“Yeah, I remember,” George started, “Why?”

“Do you know any, like... similar songs? There’s a friend I kind of need to impress.”

George was taken aback by this.

It was completely unlike Clay to ask such an albeit personal question, let alone speak to George as if his opinion was of any sort of value.

“What do you mean?”

Clay’s face hardened and he continued. “It’s a long story.”

He had closed off again.

George thought to himself, trying to find some sort of song in his brain that had a similar tone and motif as the song he had heard Clay listening to.

After a few moments of introspection, George finally offered a suggestion.

“I don’t know much about this friend, obviously, but maybe Frankie Cosmos? She has a very similar audience to Phoebe Bridgers from what I’ve seen. Plus, she’s amazing, both lyrically and physically talent-wise,” George introduced, face growing warm once he realized how much he had been rambling.

Much to his surprise, he was met with almost a chuckle from Clay. He had only heard him laugh like this maybe once before: the first night at the skatepark when Clay saw Nick.

“Damn, George, you’re kinda down bad for this Frankie girl, huh?” Clay teased, tone veering the line between joking and taunting.

George’s face reddened as he shook his head. “Nope, definitely not my type.” He didn’t feel like going into any more detail than that; he didn’t need Clay to have any more ammunition to make fun of him with.

George noticed Clay’s once fidgeting hands begin to type on his keyboard. George peeked at Clay’s computer and realized he was typing in the artist’s name.

When a picture came up, Clay smirked. “Why aren’t you simping, George? She’s pretty,” he teased, and George couldn’t tell if it was simply friendly banter or his usual malice.

“Once again,” George responded, “Not my type.”

Clay raised an eyebrow. “What *is* your type then?”

Without thinking, George shrugged. “I don’t know, *men* ?”

This elicited a frighteningly aggressive wheeze from Clay, the blond almost doubled-over his laptop laughing as George covered his face in embarrassment of what he had just said.

George simply rolled his eyes as Clay composed himself, once again returning to Eclipse to code.

After an hour or so of straight coding, without any conversation, George spoke up. He couldn't take the confusing feeling of unknowingness in his chest.

"Why are you suddenly... not *hating* me?"

Clay's eyes widened; he clearly was not expecting this question.

"What?" the blond out, seemingly feigning confusion.

"What do you mean *what* ? You've practically targeted me within the first minute of meeting me?"

With this, Clay shrugged, and George watched as his gaze returned back to his computer.

It was unlike Clay to be so *impassive* in the face of such an accusation.

Maybe Clay *did* still hate him.

Perhaps, Sapnap had just forced Clay to be nicer to George out of pity for him.

Either way, George didn't care.

If Clay could hate George, George could hate Clay too.

George explained he should be returning home, and Clay simply nodded in response.

George walked back towards the door frame of Clay's room but was stopped with a "George, wait!"

George turned to see Clay standing a couple of feet from where he was.

“Don’t forget, Halloween’s this coming Saturday.”

George raised an eyebrow at this rather random statement but nodded all the same, humming with fabricated understanding.

With that, George left, feeling practically more confused than he was when he had first arrived.

CLAY

Clay sat in his room, scrolling through the songs of the artist, Frankie Cosmos, that George had recommended.

Clay couldn’t lie, George wasn’t kidding when he said she was good.

Clay liked her music considerably more than he did the one Gogy had recommended, much to his surprise; this new artist was much more upbeat and overall sanguine.

Clay found himself instinctively looping one of her more popular songs: “Fool.”

“your name is a triangle, your heart is a square

I love to see you way over there

once I was happy, you found it intriguing

then you got to me & left me bleeding

you make me feel like a fool

waiting for you”

Clay hummed the melody to himself, listening to it so many times that he had almost had the rhythm and lyrics memorized already.

He couldn't lie, some of the lyrics aligned with his opinions on a certain person. As much as he tried to push away the unwanted thoughts, they would reappear tenfold at every new repetition of the song.

Remembering he had to send the song to Gogy, and not just keep it for himself, he opened Discord.

***dream:** okayy i have a song >:) fool by frankie cosmos*

Immediately, Gogy began typing.

***gogy:** omg no way,,, i literally was just talking about her music with someone today :))*

***dream:** are you impressed by my god tier music taste*

***gogy:** very*

***dream:** am i hot now*

***gogy:** yes, i am head over heels for u*

Clay was happily surprised to see Gogy jokingly flirting back with him. Usually, the joking was fairly one-sided.

***dream:** stop im blushing ;)*

***gogy:** good hehehe*

***dream:** smh now youre the simp*

***gogy:** perhaps.. I have to go, but i will give you a new song soon :))*

***dream:** byee*

After a few more rounds of listening to the song, he put it on full volume, letting it completely encompass his surroundings.

Clay felt a twinge of annoyance as the music paused and his phone chimed, signifying someone was calling him.

Sapnap Is Calling

Clay raised his eyebrow, not expecting a phone call from the boy. Nevertheless, he answered.

“Hello?” Clay asked, rather confused.

From the other line, he heard giggles emitting. “Clay, are you good? Your Discord is linked to your Spotify, and it looks like you’ve been listening to the same song for an hour now.”

Clay internally facepalmed, taking a mental note to turn off sharing his listening history the next time he pulled a stunt like that.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” Clay responded, not sure if he was being honest or not.

Clay could still make out faint laughing from Sapnap through the call. “I looked up the lyrics, Clay, and *damn* you’re down bad for someone.” The small giggles had now evolved into a full-blown chuckle.

Clay shook his head. “Nah, it’s just a good song.”

“You sure?” Sapnap joked. “I mean, George *did* just get back from your guys’ coding thing. Maybe you have a thing for Brits.”

Although Sapnap was clearly joking, Clay couldn't help but awkwardly swallow the lump in his throat.

Sapnap, unfortunately, seemed to notice his silence.

"Wait-"

"Sap,"

"You don't-"

"Please, don't-"

"You're *actually* into *George*?" Sapnap exclaimed over the line, voice practically scaring Clay at how loud it was.

Clay groaned annoyingly into the phone. "Sapnap! You live with him! He might hear you!"

Sapnap giggled into the line. "Don't worry, he's out right now. Don't change the topic, though- I can't believe I was right. Everyone thinks you *hate* George."

Clay cleared his throat sheepishly, unsure of what to say. "I know, that's kinda what I wanted people to think."

Then, Sapnap asked the dreaded question: "Why?"

Clay felt his face warm.

"Can we do this over text instead? I'd rather not-"

Clay was cut off as Sapnap disconnected from the call. *Guess that's a yes .*

Sapnap: Go ahead. No judgement here, btw

Clay rolled his eyes, but began to type.

Once he started, he couldn't stop. It was as if he had been waiting to spill out his thoughts for weeks now. And quite honestly, he had.

Clay: ok so the first day of school i saw him when i first walked in and thought

damn,,,, he seems really cool.

I didn't want people to know that i... yaknow.. so i thought pretending to hate him would be the best way to rid myself of feeling that way.

It only made it worse though,, because regardless of how rude i was to him, george would only ever be kind back.

then, karl's stupid fucking party made it 1000x worse.

During spin the bottle, we kissed for six fucking seconds.

SIX.

and i was like... holy shit.. maybe i actually LIKE HIM like him.

it only got worse from there.

when george got super fucking drunk, he was practically flirting with me, that motherfucker.

first, he called me pretty. i called him drunk. then, he said, and i quote: "drunk or not, you're hot as fuck."

worst part is, he doesn't remember SHIT cuz he was so fucking blackout

i literally cannot pretend to hate him anymore.

idfk what to do

After what felt like an eternity, Sapnap finally responded.

Sapnap: holy shit. did u tell him what happened when he got drunk??????

Clay: obviously not

Sapnap seemed like he was typing for quite a while.

Sapnap: Clay, you know you're like my brother, but you have to tell him what happened. Regardless of your feelings for him, he deserves to know.

Clay groaned to himself. Sapnap was right.

Clay: yeah ik. i just don't know what to do right now

Sapnap: Well u better figure it out soon

Clay: why?

Sapnap: You still have to babysit George on Halloween ;)

Oh, shit.

Chapter End Notes

hopefully the plot progression in this makes up for the late update... LMAO hope u enjoyed :)

ten ○ a friendly perspective

Chapter Notes

sapnap pov chapter? sapnap pov chapter. (also thanks for 4k hits besties <3 ily all /p)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

SAPNAP

Sapnap hadn't found anything weird with Clay looping the same song over and over on Discord. In fact, he was fairly used to it; Clay had even told him once or twice that he would instinctively repeat songs, usually incidentally.

Sapnap couldn't help the curiosity mustering in his chest, so naturally, he took a listen to the song. It wasn't anything inherently special; just your usual bedroom pop song.

What he *did* find weird, however, was that a few moments after listening to the song, he heard the same upbeat melody coming from the room next to his: George's.

Characteristically, he was intrigued.

Sapnap stood outside of George's doorway, hearing him practically *giggling* to himself. Sapnap fought off a smirk as he knocked, making George aware of his presence.

After the news of Clay's love confession, he was not at all dazed.

In fact, Sapnap was surprised it had taken him that long to come to his senses.

Sapnap knew Clay well and thought of him as nothing short of a brother. They had battled consistent issues together, never straying as the other's closest confidant. Thus, Sapnap *knew* Clay. He could tell by the yearning look in his eye when Clay first saw him that he felt more than just fabricated hatred for George.

Then, he saw it once more on the night of the party.

Sapnap had already been hanging out with Karl previously, so being assigned to kiss him in the game of Spin the Bottle was nothing short of a relief.

He saw the same wave of satisfaction he got from kissing Karl in Clay after he had kissed George.

Sapnap did not have nearly the mysteriously tantalizing reputation as Clay, but he had shared in his easy popularity and guarded extroversion. Sapnap saw the impassivity in Clay's so-called "infatuation" with his previous girlfriends. It was clear to anyone that he was uncaring in the relationships, and Sapnap hated seeing Clay so trapped.

When he first saw the look of practical fascination Clay had for George, he was relatively surprised. He had not seen Clay look at someone with such passion before, or at least not in a long while.

He was happy Clay was no longer trapped by forced relationships.

Now, Clay was only trapped by himself.

Sapnap gingerly walked into George's room following his invitation to enter, a smug grin sat unyielding above his slightly unshaven chin.

"What's up?" George asked him, looking up from where he was seated on his bed with his laptop on his lap.

Sapnap stifled a laugh at the absurdity of the situation; *George was listening to the same song as Clay after Clay had practically flooded out his unbridled adulation for George to Sapnap .*

"Where'd you hear that song?"

He might as well at least be blunt with it.

At this, George's cheeks seemed to redden. If George had such a visible reaction to even the small inkling of a hint towards Clay, Sapnap could only imagine how George would react to hearing how Clay felt about him.

"My friend recommended it to me," he responded, feigning nonchalance.

Bingo.

Sapnap raised a smug brow. "Your friend, as in *Clay*?"

George shot him a genuinely puzzled look as he cocked his head to the side. "No...? Why would Clay have shown me this song?"

Sapnap has to practically force his mouth not to lie agape. Apparently, he had read the entire situation completely incorrectly. As it turns out, it was some sort of alarmingly unfortunate coincidence.

"Nevermind." Sapnap shook his head. "Who, then?"

At this, George sat up more so and rubbed his neck sheepishly. "If I'm quite honest, I don't know," he answered with a nervous-sounding chuckle.

Oh, now Sapnap was *really* interested.

Without an invitation, Sapnap collapsed onto the foot of George's bed. After an annoyed groan from George, Sapnap inquired further.

"Okay, George, now my interest has peaked. Tell me what's going on."

After a few minutes of hesitant back and forth, George finally conceded.

With an eye roll, he began: “It all started when I opened my locker and found a note with hilariously uneven handwriting from someone I now call Dream--”

Listening with intrigue, Sapnap took in the mass sums of information George was feeding him about his secret and mysterious companion. He ended it off with their final messages, explaining how he and the boy were exchanging song recommendations. There were a few conversational holes here and there, George clearly trying to keep either his or the boy’s privacy, but nonetheless, Sapnap got relatively all of the information necessary to piece together a calculated hypothesis:

This “Dream” fellow was Clay .

All of the information lined up perfectly; Dream’s interest in coding and Minecraft coupled with a shitty sleep schedule and affinity towards skateboarding, as well as their colliding music discussions, seemed to line up exactly with Clay’s.

Sapnap, of course, was not going to be the one to ruin the theatrics of it all. After all, Sapnap was nothing if not a sucker for ridiculously stupid romantic comedy tropes.

Feigning ignorance, Sapnap acted in response as if he had never heard of a person like Dream before.

“Dream sounds super cool, man. It’s really nice you’re making new friends.”

“-Even if I have no idea who they are,” George interjected.

“Even if you have no idea who they are,” Sapnap repeated.

You might not, Sapnap thought to himself, but I do.

Sapnap rode up to the skatepark at his usual time, seeing Clay already skating around as he had expected.

Sapnap had always been open to Clay about his envy of his natural skill, and with skating, there was no difference. Clay was always fairly talented in Sapnap's eyes; as a kid, he picked up coding and gaming like it was in his blood.

With skating, however, it was a completely alternate scale.

When the boys had first begun skating, they did it together at around age 12. Sapnap was slowly but steadily improving, as most beginners would. Clay, on the other hand, practically speed-ran success.

Clay had gotten his ollie down within the first week of the boys learning to skate. He got his popshuvit three days after that.

Both of these tricks, Sapnap still struggled with. He could admit to himself, even around half a decade later, he was shit at skateboarding.

Clay shot Sapnap an easy grin, most likely recognizing his presence. Sapnap had to hold back a giggle, careful not to expose his knowledge of both the Gogy situation and the fact that *he* was actually the one writing to him.

“What’s up, Sap?” Clay asked, reaching out his hand for them to do their token handshake.

When they were younger, they had outlined intricate steps for their handshake. By now, having withstood the test of practically a decade, it had morphed into more-or-less a complex g-lock handshake.

When the boys pulled away, Sapnap noticed a notification buzz from Clay’s phone.

Perhaps this was his chance .

“Who’s that?” Sapnap asked, fabricating unknowingness.

Clay seemed surprised at the question. “Um... just a friend,” he responded, coupled with a slight shrug to his shoulders.

“Which friend?” Sapnap asked casually, a brow raised.

Clay sighed, seeming like he was resigning to tell Sapnap the same story George had told him only hours ago.

“How much time do you have?”

Sapnap listened as Clay told him all the same details as George, speaking about the “Gogy” person as if he had known him for years.

Clay had added a slight bit more information that George had left out, for example how “Gogy” had helped him when he was struggling over George.

At least Sapnap’s suspicions that Clay was Dream were now undoubtedly confirmed.

The boys eventually parted ways after Sapnap bulshitted a vague response about the Gogy situation and Sapnap returned home, his Halloween plan swimming in his mind.

Sapnap sat on his couch, Karl’s back on his lap looking up at him as Sapnap instinctively ran his fingers through his light-haired friends’ locks.

Sapnap explained the situation to Karl, reluctantly so.

As much as he knew it wasn’t his story to tell, he recognized if he didn’t tell *someone* the truth

would've spilled out eventually to either Clay or George. Then, the consequences of his actions would've increased tenfold.

Karl, however, promised he wouldn't tell anyone, and Sapnap knew he would keep his word. After all, he practically trusted Karl with his life.

Karl hummed contentedly as Sapnap continued to run his fingers through his hair as they discussed their situation.

"I think George likes Clay," Karl commented, a grin on his face.

At this, Sapnap giggled. Karl always had a refreshingly blunt way with words. "Oh yeah?" he prodded.

Karl chuckled lightly. "Yeah. I mean, did you see him at my party? He was practically throwing himself onto Clay on my porch."

Sapnap laughed back. "They're idiots, huh?"

"Yeah, but so are you," Karl commented light-heartedly, sticking up his hand to poke Sapnap in the chest.

"What?" Sapnap exclaimed, gasping dramatically to fake hurt.

Karl grinned at his theatrics. "It took you weeks to ask me out, even after we kissed, you nimrod."

Sapnap shook his head, although there was a smile plastered unwaveringly on his face. "Touché."

Tomorrow was Saturday, meaning Halloween.

Sapnap, being the overly-meddling friend he was, had forced Clay to tell him what he was being for Halloween as he came over to hang out with George so Sapnap could go on his much-awaited date with Karl.

Draco Malfoy, Clay had told him.

At the time, Sapnap had snickered at his response. Of course, Clay would choose the practically most fawned-over character of the year. Clay protested saying it was only due to the similar hair color and same Hogwarts House, but Sapnap still pestered him relentlessly for it.

Now, Sapnap was practically dragging George to the costume store in hopes of finding a last-minute matching outfit.

He still had yet to tell George who was coming to stay with him while Sapnap was gone, and quite honestly, he didn't plan to. He thought the surprise would make it all the funnier.

George was clearly reluctant to wear anything, but when Sapnap suggested a Harry Potter-esc costume, he conceded.

"I'm a Ravenclaw," George commented, pointing to one of the blue-and-black robes on the costume shop's walls.

Sapnap nodded and pulled one off the shelf, surprised George was being so uncharacteristically agreeable at the moment.

After the boys checked out, Sapnap and George returned home.

Before Sapnap could even close his bedroom door, he had received a well-timed text from Clay.

Clay: ayo tomorrow's saturday (aka halloween),, am i still coming for george tomorrow

Sapnap snickered, laughing at his own joke as he typed it out to send to his friend.

Sapnap: Isn't it a little early to be coming for George 🤔

Almost immediately, Clay began typing.

Clay: i hate you. I am literally going to block u

Sapnap just sent a smiley face in response, unyielding in his constant teasing of Clay.

Saturday came quickly.

It was currently 3 PM, and Clay was set to arrive at 4.

Sapnap put on his own costume - it was a matching Adventure Time costume with Karl (Karl was dressed as Prince Bubblegum and Sapnap was Marshall Lee)- before eventually helping George put the final touches on his.

Filled with nervous excitement, Sapnap counted down the minutes until Clay was set to arrive. Sapnap could tell George was apprehensive, still blissfully unaware of who was coming over, which only further fueled Sapnap's smug enthusiasm.

At 3:58, the doorbell rang.

Sapnap's head perked up as he walked briskly to the door.

He opened it to reveal a dapper-looking Clay with a nervous smile on his face.

"Hi!" he welcomed, ushering for Clay to enter to ease his apprehension.

Before Clay had the chance to, however, George called out from his room.

“Are you finally going to tell me who’s coming over?” he asked, voice becoming less and less muffled as George turned the corner to the doorway.

Sapnap let the situation speak for itself, trying not to wheeze as he watched Clay’s face transform into a blush and George’s eyes widen with realization as to who was going to be staying with him for the evening.

“God,” he said quietly, mostly to himself, “You two are pathetic.”

Chapter End Notes

this was probably one of my favorite chapters to write recently. i wanted to do a little bit of character building, and i feel like i accomplished it pretty well (everyone say thank you to sapnap and sapnap only ;))

i hope you enjoyed! to make up for the last update being a week after the previous, i wanted to crank this one out early

halloween next... what will happen... stay tuned

i saw someone do this and thought it was cute so here y'all go: every song i listened to while writing / editing this

Yr the Best! - carpetgarden

Amour plastique - Videoclub

Piece of My Heart - spookyghostboy

Silly Girl - chloe moriondo

Absolutely Smitten - dodie

Luv Note - chloe moriondo

Lover Is a Day - Cuco

Honeypie - JAWNY

If Love Was Like a Flower - Marsandaras (M*A*R*S)

Loving Is Easy - Rex Orange County, Benny Sings

Out of My Mind - Seth Malvin

please never fall in love again - Feyesal, Ollie MN

You Really Got Me - Mono Mix - The Kinks

Burn Slowly/ I Love You - The Brazen Youth

Forever & Always - Zeph

Self Control - Frank Ocean

Corduroy Dreams - Rex Orange County

Dance with Me - beabadoobee

Aubrey - Sonic Blume

Fool - Cavetown

Hey Lover! - Wabie

Vanilla Twilight - Owl City

eleven ○ closure and contentedness

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

GEORGE

George didn't know who he was expecting to practically babysit him on Halloween, but he most definitely did not think it would be *Clay* of all people.

George stood, eyes wide with surprise and something he couldn't quite place as he took in the man standing in the doorway before him.

The first thing he noticed was his face; his usual wavy blond hair was slicked back slightly so it only fell on the corners of his face. On the outer corner of Clay's eyes, thin black eyeliner was attendant.

The next thing he took in, however, was the fact that they were wearing matching costumes.

George had to bite back a groan of frustration at Sapnap for orchestrating such an ordeal.

George watched Clay wave sheepishly as he entered Sapnap's house.

"So, Sap," Clay started, not bothering to verbally greet George. "How much longer until Karl picks you up?" he asked with a smirk growing on his face.

Sapnap shook his head with what looked like embarrassment but was grinning all the same. "Any second now, actually."

After a few moments of neither comfortable or uncomfortable silence, the doorbell of Sapnap's house rang. George turned expectantly, finding Karl standing with a grin in the entryway.

"Hey, Karl!" Sapnap greeted, almost immediately perking up. George had to stop himself from giggling at the awkward encounter between the boys.

Sapnap walked towards the door, but first turned to George before exiting.

“*He doesn’t hate you*,” he whispered, loud enough so only George could hear.

Before George could respond, Karl and Sapnap headed on their ways, leaving Clay and George alone.

“Can we just be chill?” Clay asked, tone unreadable. “I really cannot deal with any more shit today.”

George nodded, slightly bewildered but thankful all the same. “Very chill.”

George watched as Clay collapsed into Sapnap’s couch in the living room, scrolling through something on his phone.

George took this opportunity to take in the physical appearance of the boy. In short, he was tantalizing. Even through his protanopia, he could clearly see the parallels between the green of Clay’s robe and his veridian eyes.

Against George’s better judgement, he let himself acknowledge the problematic thoughts plaguing his psyche: *Clay looked good*.

George continued studying the man until a familiar low voice interrupted the rapidly turning cogs of his mind.

“Just because I’m on my phone doesn’t mean I can’t tell you’re staring” Clay commented, eyes still glued to his phone screen.

George felt his face redden at the sudden accusation, rubbing his neck absentmindedly. “Sorry.”

“Don’t apologize,” Clay corrected, still not bothering to make eye contact with George.

After a couple minutes of bitter quiet, George cleared his throat and began to speak. “As much as I appreciate you babysitting me,” George started, sarcasm lacing his tone, “I don’t understand why I

wasn't warned that *you* were coming."

At this, Clay finally met his gaze, raising an eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

George instinctively furrowed his brow. "What do you mean, 'What do I mean,'? Sapnap refused to tell me who was coming over," he said inquisitively, almost as if George was unsure of himself.

Clay groaned with what sounded like discontent, muttering "That bastard," to himself.

"I assumed he would have told you. Sorry."

Now it was George's time to follow up the vague apology. "Why are you sorry?"

Clay turned and looked up towards him on the couch more prominently, shrugging to himself. "Sorry I'm here, I guess."

George couldn't help the fluttering sensation that was bubbling in his chest. Something about Clay's tone felt so uncharacteristically soft, as if he was genuinely sorry for his presence.

George giggled, trying to laugh off the awkwardly sincere atmosphere that was growing between the two. "It's fine- better than having to spend another night with *Sapnap* ," he joked.

At this, he was met with an aggressively beguiling wheeze from Clay.

Maybe, tonight wouldn't be so awful.

The boys made monotonous small talk until George caught himself staring at Clay once again. Clay seemed to notice as well.

"Why do you keep staring at me?" Clay asked defensively.

George absentmindedly sat next to Clay on the couch. “I don’t quite know, to be honest,” he answered quickly. “I’m not trying to, don’t worry.”

Clay seemed to sigh.

He seemed almost nervous as he looked around, clearly lost in thought.

“George?” he began, tone returning to the empathetic and soft one it was earlier in their conversation. George nodded, motioning for Clay to continue. “I’m sorry.”

Sapnap’s words burned his tongue. “*He doesn’t hate you.*”

George felt his eyebrows raise in pure consternation. Why was *Clay* of all people apologizing to him?

“For what?” he muttered quietly.

“You know how you said you didn’t remember that party at all? Where you got drunk?”

George raised an eyebrow. “Which party? Karl’s?”

Clay nodded. “I should’ve told you what happened.”

George felt a burst of anxiety manifest itself in his stomach. *What could have happened?* Did he do something?

“Basically, we played spin the bottle and we-”

At these words, George’s memory quickly unclouded, as if it was a lever that unlocked the recollection of that night.

Spin the bottle.

Clay and George had played Spin the Bottle.

Clay and George had-

“Kissed,” George practically exhaled out, no longer meeting Clay’s eye contact.

“Yeah.”

All George could feel in his stomach was a strange melange of contempt and elation. On one hand, he had kissed the one person in the world who hated him.

Or, at least *seemed* to.

Recently, George could admit, Clay had been unusually kind to him. Not that George was complaining, however.

On the other hand, George had *kissed* Clay. The same Clay that had tantalizing looks and an even more attractive laugh. The six-foot-three skater he found listening to Phoebe Bridgers at 4 am. *That* Clay.

“Did anything else happen?” George forced out. He couldn’t tell if he wanted to laugh or cry (or both).

Clay rubbed his neck sheepishly.

“Not really?”

George raised an eyebrow. “What do you mean ‘not really’?”

“Well,” Clay began, laughing softly. “You called me both ‘pretty’ and ‘hot as fuck’, but I figured you’d probably be embarrassed if I brought that up.”

Instantly, George felt his face warm. “I *said* that?”

Clay chuckled. “I mean, you were just pointing out the obvious.”

Maybe Clay hating him wasn’t the worst thing; his ego was unbearable , he thought to himself, giggling slightly at his own internal joke.

After a while, George returned to his room and did the only thing he could think to do: text Dream.

gogy: *dreamdreamdreamdreamdream*

After only a few seconds, Dream responded.

dream: *gogygogygogygogygogy?*

gogy: *damn you responded that fast even on halloween... really got no social life, huh??*

George could make out a faint wheeze from the living room outside of his door. He purposefully ignored it.

dream: *you texted me first???*

gogy: *touché. anyways..... heLp*

dream: *whats up?*

gogy: long story short i'm confused.

dream: that story might seem a little TOO short for me to give advice for... any more context?

gogy: ugh okay... basically this person im friends(?) with... kind of hates me? but for whatever reason, recently he ... doesn't hate me

dream: wait does he hate you or are you friends?

gogy: IDK UGHHH

dream: its ok gogy,, calm down :)) if i was you i'd just talk to him. worst comes to worst at least u get your answer

George smiled to himself at Dream's refreshingly logical response.

gogy: you know, for a stranger who practically went through my locker, you're pretty helpful

dream: i do what i can ;) wait gogy before u go

gogy: :] yea?

dream: if someone had been lying to you for like... a really long time...

gogy: go on...

dream: would u want them to spare your feelings and keep lying or tell the truth

gogy: definitely the truth.

dream: ok ty :) ur the best

gogy: no u >:(

dream: :DDD

CLAY

George and Clay ended up somewhat ignoring each other for the following hour, Clay settling on watching YouTube videos on his phone and talking to Gogy while George did something in his room.

After a while, George returned, sitting next to him on the couch.

Clay tried to ignore his burning gaze, pretending not to notice how clearly he was staring. Being in such close proximity was challenging, especially after he practically poured his heart out about the man days previous to Sapnap.

“Clay?” George asked quietly.

Clay turned to look at him, and instantly noticed the look of coldness that he had only ever seen the night of the party.

“If I ask you a question, can you answer honestly?”

Clay nodded.

“Do you hate me?”

George's tone was unreadable, but Clay could tell through his eyes that he seemed genuinely concerned. Clay didn't answer, praying that George would continue so he had something to go off of.

George, thankfully, did so.

"I assumed you did, considering the first day of school you wouldn't even fucking talk to me. But, recently, it's as if something has changed. It's like you almost enjoy my company. It's fine if you hate me- well, actually, not *fine* per se, but it would be whatever, I guess. My point being, do you?"

Clay sighed. The guilt he had once felt while being mean to George had increased tenfold. This was it. His façade was cracking, and he wasn't even resentful about it.

Clay couldn't even muster out a response.

All of his mess-ups had shown George that he *didn't* hate him- he simply *couldn't*.

To Clay, George was giddiness. He was kind. Even when Clay was so clearly trying to instigate conflict, George continued to put up an empathetic front. George was so exasperatingly *George* that it was almost sickening. George was a fever, pushing fire through Clay's veins, and yet he relished in it. The pain that George presented him with was so deliriously addicting that Clay couldn't get enough of it.

Clay took Gogy's words with weight: *definitely the truth*.

Clay couldn't force himself to respond.

Instead, he leaned forward and practically collapsed into George with a hug.

George quickly pulled back for a second, taken aback (reasonably so), and at first Clay thought that he had fucked up too hard- that his fabricated hatred had caused a rift too far divided.

After a few moments, however, George hugged back, fitting his head comfortably under Clay's chin.

“I am so sorry,” Clay said softly.

George giggled lightly, Clay feeling the vibrations of his laugh on his chest. “So I take this as a ‘no, I don’t hate you’?”

Clay shook his head. “No, I don’t.”

After a few long moments, the boys mutually pulled away. Clay couldn’t ignore the fact that George’s face was tinted red with what looked like a blush, but he didn’t comment on it.

“If you don’t hate me,” George broke the silence, “Why did you act like you did?”

Clay shook his head. “Not right now.”

“Not right now?” George clarified, eyebrows raised.

“I’ll explain, just not now.”

GEORGE

Clay didn’t hate him.

Not only did Clay not hate him, but he *hugged* him.

It felt good hugging him. He felt warm. He felt *alive* .

Eventually, George took his leave, returning to his room to gush about the experience to Dream. At

the moment, as almost sad as it was to have a stranger as your closest friend, Dream was one of his closest confidants.

***gogy:** DREAMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM*

***dream:** GOGYYYYYYY*

***gogy:** GUESS WHAT*

***dream:** i take it went well?*

***gogy:** way to ruin the suspense smh*

***dream:** whoops :P either way, happy for u :D*

***gogy:** ty for ur advice <3 you're a good friend*

***dream:** i also have positive news! i was honest to this person for the first time in a while (thanks to u heheheh) :)) i think it went well ! i think i officially made them a friend :)*

***gogy:** that's good considering you clearly don't have any friends besides me. you could use another tbh. ;)*

***dream:** WTF >:(((*

***gogy:** happy for you dream :) seriously*

***dream:** <3*

George exited his room, feeling just as (if not more) giddy as he did once he entered, high on friendship and a feeling that was unknown to him.

His cheeks were warm. He was truly content.

George sat down next to Clay, almost unsure if the past couple of hours had been a fantastical delusion or not.

George felt like being bold. After all, what more was there to lose? Thus, he began, "Now, since you don't hate me-

"-That doesn't mean it's not a future possibility, George, don't push it."

"As I was saying," he dragged out, joking annoyance at the interruption, "Now I feel obligated to say the last 3 or 4 pages of code you inputted for our competition is absolute shite."

At first, Clay's eyes widened.

Then, he practically burst out wheezing.

George almost flinched, never having had heard Clay laugh with such zeal before.

"What's so funny?" George asked, brow furrowed, as Clay continued laughing hysterically.

"You- you said," he started, between wheezes. "You said *shite* !"

Almost doubled-over, Clay was clearly trying to recover from the sheer amount of oxygen he had lost by laughing so hard.

"That was *not* that funny," George said with a huff, however he couldn't hide the grin that was forming on his face.

Clay didn't hate him .

Somehow, that fact made what would seem unbearable *more* than okay.

Because, it was Clay.

And Clay didn't hate him.

It was currently 9:32 PM. Sapnap still wouldn't be back for a few hours, and Sapnap's parents were still out God-knows-where.

Clay suggested they order food, which George happily agreed upon. All of this emotional angst was enough for him to work up a fairly hefty appetite.

George and Clay were now each full, an entire cheese-pizza deep, each eating much more than they had initially had intended.

Not wanting to be fatigued by food any longer, George retired to the couch. Clay soon followed.

George smiled at Clay as he sat down. Surprisingly, Clay smiled back.

George didn't think he would ever get used to his cheeky grin, having seen it only a few measly times before today.

Absentmindedly, George pointed to the blond's eyes. "Is that eyeliner?"

Clay seemed almost taken aback by George pointing it out. "I don't need your shit for this," he answered defensively, his soft tone being overtaken by a feeling of impassivity.

Quickly, George shook his head. “No, no,” he started, recovering his tracks. “I meant it looks good. I *definitely* couldn’t do that.”

Clay’s eyes widened with what seemed like pleasant surprise. “I can teach you, if you’d like?” George swore he could almost make out a faint dusting of pink below the tan freckles on Clay’s cheeks.

George nodded, honestly quite bewildered by Clay’s suggestion.

It felt like he was walking on eggshells when he was with Clay. When he stepped too hard, everything would crack into pieces. However, when he managed to glide gently, things with Clay seemed almost too perfect to be true.

Clay motioned for George to move closer to him on the couch as he pulled what George assumed was an eyeliner pencil from his pocket.

Reluctantly, George followed suit.

Avoiding eye contact, Clay spoke up. “Is it okay if I touch your face to do the eyeliner?”

George hesitantly nodded.

George shivered at the touch as Clay placed a surprisingly delicate hand on his cheek, cupping his face and tilting it slightly upwards.

George watched Clay’s other hand cautiously reach up to his face, holding a dark eyeliner pencil. After a few moments, and slight pressure on both eyes, Clay was finished.

“Done,” the blond commented softly.

Still, his had remained on George’s cheek.

George absentmindedly let his gaze wander around Clay’s face, first landing on his eyes, then his

jawline, and finally, his lips.

At this, Clay quickly pulled away.

“It looks good!” Clay commented, soft tone replaced with cheeriness. Clay clearly didn’t feel like acknowledging the awkward moment between the two. Quite honestly, neither did he.

George fought back a blush at the uncharacteristically close encounter between the boys.

George pulled out his phone, opening his front-facing camera.

When his face finally focused on the lens, he gasped lightly.

George was pleasantly surprised. “Wow, it looks-”

“Good, right? I’m a magician.”

The two boys were practically *grinning* at each other.

“God, this is weird,” Clay commented. George couldn’t agree more.

“Very. Good weird, I hope,” George added.

“Good weird. Different, but good.”

“Different is a good word.”

“Indeed it is.”

The boys chuckled to themselves as George continued. "Sapnap is going to freak out."

Clay raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

"He has been telling me you 'don't actually hate me' for like a month now, I just never believed him," George shrugged.

At this, Clay nodded tersely.

It looked like there were still some things Clay was hiding.

Namely, *why* .

George had so clearly expressed interest getting to know Clay, even within a day of them meeting. George had never been rude to Clay back, just on the off chance that Clay changed his mind about hating him. George had never done anything outwardly bad to Clay, so why did he feel the need to hate him?

"I'm tired," George commented.

"At like, ten PM?" Clay asked with joking judgement.

George rolled his eyes, exhaustion coming and going in waves.

"Sleep waits for no man," he protested.

"True," Clay began, "But you're like 5'1. I'd consider you a child at best."

George flipped him off jokingly, letting his eyes flutter closed as he dissolved into the couch cushions.

"Goodnight, George."

“Night, Clay.”

Today had been different, and George couldn't have asked for anything better.

Chapter End Notes

was this realistic at all in terms of time or just reality in general?

no.

do i care?

also no. /lh

anyways, i needed to speedrun fluff before it got too dragged out... anyways hope u enjoyed! here's to (thankfully) no more unnecessarily rude clay...

twelve ○ a good team

Chapter Notes

just wanted to say i officially changed the name of the story, cuz the plot has kinda drifted since when i initially planned for this story :)) anyways.....

holy shit!! tysm for 5k hits (HOLY SHIT while writing this we hit 6k hits AH) :) your guys' support means a lot- so glad so many of you are enjoying this story :)

also... i am sorry for making yall wait a week for an update :/ i just genuinely havent been in the mood to write, but i am now !! tysm for being patient <3

GEORGE

George hummed contentedly, instinctively melting into the warmth of what he assumed was the couch he fell asleep on.

His eyelids fluttered slowly, weighted and strenuous to open.

George attempted to dislodge his arms from whatever they were weighed down by on the couch cushions but was instantly stopped as a strong force pressed upon his back.

At this startling encounter, George's eyes shot open.

Then, he took in the predicament he was in.

Glancing around, not only did George realize that the bar keeping him on the couch was in fact *Clay's arm* , but the warmth he was pressing himself towards was not the couch cushions, but rather Clay's chest.

Sometime during the evening, Clay must've *also* fallen asleep on the sofa.

Now, George was practically leaning fully on the blond as he was blissfully unaware in his slumber. With a slight stir from Clay, George pulled his arm away from the blond and reached out

to grab his phone to check the time.

11:42.

Sapnap would be home soon.

George would, quite honestly, be lying to himself if he said he didn't find his current situation at least the slightest bit comfortable. From where his head was leaned against Clay's continuously rising and falling chest, he could faintly make out the blond's heartbeat. It was endearingly slow.

George looked up, now suddenly able to see Clay's resting face from a low angle from where he was situated.

He looked empyreal, pale moonlight highlighting his jawline as the gossamer atmosphere surrounding the boys only elevated his beauty.

George had never noticed how mystifyingly *pretty* Clay was. Or, on second thought, maybe he had. Maybe he just wasn't brave enough to let himself acknowledge it.

His fantasies were abruptly interrupted as the blond shifted beneath him, most likely beginning to wake up. George quickly moved off of Clay.

Seemingly just in time, Clay sat up and stretched his arms limply.

Then, the blond shot him a tentative look.

"Were you-" he paused, seemingly formulating his words, "Were you sleeping on me?"

George raised his hands in surrender. "Not by choice!" he protested, flustered embarrassment lacing his tone.

At this, Clay chuckled lightly.

It was still admittedly strange for George to see this newfound amicable and cordial side of Clay. Nevertheless, he was enjoying it greatly.

“Thank God we got up before Sapnap got here,” Clay joked, elbowing George light-heartedly in the rib.

George giggled as he prepared to joke back. “He would’ve thought we were-” George’s voice trailed off.

Clay smirked at George’s very apparent blush as he did so. George internally cursed his face for reddening so easily.

“We would’ve thought we were... *what* ?” Clay asked, clearly feigning innocence.

At this, George rolled his eyes and turned away to head towards his room.

“You’re annoying!” he called out, before shutting the door.

“The feeling is mutual!” Clay’s muffled voice retorted back.

It was strange having Clay *not* hate him.

To be honest, however, George was quite truly enjoying it.

SAPNAP

Sapnap walked towards his front door, muffled yelling audible from outside the house.

What the hell? he thought to himself, slightly worried by the loud noises coming from behind the door.

"You fucking loser!" he heard what sounded like Clay's voice yell, muted and faint.

Quickly, out of both concern and curiosity, Sapnap threw the door open, revealing two boys stopped dead in their tracks.

There stood Clay and George, stopped halfway in motion with wild grins on their face, disheveled hair on their heads, and beaten-up-looking pillows in their hands.

Immediately upon Sapnap's entrance, both boys jumped away from each other.

Sapnap had to stop himself from breaking out fully into laughter.

"Are you guys," he began, mentally controlling his breath so he wouldn't start chuckling, "having a pillow fight?"

Sapnap took notice of the happily flushed face of the boys.

He clearly had missed *something* important; no longer were the looks shared between George and Clay impassive and cold, but rather playful and filled with curiosity.

In short, *what the fuck?*

"Maybe we are, Sap," Clay said, jokingly. "What, can't two men have a pillow fight with each other?"

Sapnap laughed to himself, shaking his head. "Clay, you're barely 18. Don't flatter yourself."

Sapnap walked further inside, gaze traveling to George. If Sapnap was seeing clearly, his face almost looked flushed.

Damn , George was down bad.

“How was your babysitter?” Sapnap asked, unable to hide the smirk on his face.

George simply shrugged. “S alright, I guess.”

There was a strange, but not exactly uncomfortable, silence between the three until Clay spoke up.

“Listen, I skated here, and it’s getting late so I should probably get back. My parents will kill me if my sister is alone for too long.”

“Ah, damn. See ya’, Clay,” Sapnap said, performing the boys’ handshakes.

“Bye, dude,” Clay said, walking to the door.

Before Clay exited the doorway, he turned around. “Also, bye George!” he said with a smile, waving.

He left before George could respond.

Sapnap turned back to George, a smug grin on his face. “What the hell happened?” he exclaimed, a small twinge of pride as a wingman that the boys somehow didn’t visibly kill each other.

George shrugged, and Sapnap noticed a small inherent smile grow on his face. “I don’t know, to be honest. I kinda just asked him why he acted as if he hated me, and he said he didn’t... and we hugged.”

Sapnap’s eyes widen instinctively. “A hug? Damn, you’re *in* !”

George raised his eyebrow at this. “What do you mean?”

Sapnap groaned with fabricated annoyance. “You *know* what I mean. You’ve been fucking ogling

over Clay since you met, plus at Karl's party with that kiss-

Sapnap's words fell on his lips, realizing what he had said.

"You knew about that?" George asked, eyes riddled with concern.

"Well, yeah. I was there. But, *you remembered* that?"

George shook his head. "No, Clay told me," he began. *Clay took his advice. Noted.* "Why didn't you tell me if you knew this happened?" George almost sounded disappointed.

Sapnap shrugged empathetically. "I thought Clay should be the one to tell you. After all, he's the one you were fucking making out with-

"Just shut up," George interrupted, but the slight amount of malice in his voice was replaced with a soft giggle.

"Now," the dark-haired boy began, "How was your date with Karl?"

At this, Sapnap felt his cheeks practically flare up.

"Good."

"Good?"

"Really good, actually."

George punched him light-heartedly on the shoulder. "Congrats, dude! Did you guys kiss?"

Yes .

“A gentleman never tells,” Sapnap said, trying to hide how absolutely giddy he was at the entire endeavor.

“So that’s a yes.”

Sapnap chuckled. Despite their usual small bickering, Sapnap was eternally grateful for the exchange program that brought George to the U.S.. They had only known each other for a couple months, and yet George was already one of his closest friends.

“He may or may not be my boyfriend now,” Sapnap said with feigned indifference.

Sapnap held back a laugh at his friend’s gasp. “No way, Sapnap! That’s huge!”

“Yeah, yeah, Karl’s great,” Sapnap said, grinning. “But,” he continued, “You have your own light brown-haired man to fawn over.”

GEORGE

George walked into school and walked straight towards his locker. The events that had taken place on Saturday still played on loop in his head; the feeling of sleeping on Clay’s chest, his chin on his shoulder as they hugged, and his hand on his cheek while Clay did George’s eyeliner. George couldn’t get *stupid fucking* Clay out of his *stupid fucking* mind.

As George’s eyes darted over the letter’s page, George couldn’t help but feel his heartbeat quickly at Dream’s question.

“Would you ever want to reveal our identities?”

Did he? Honestly, George was unsure. On one hand, Dream had been slowly becoming one of George’s closest confidants. He had told him about Clay (sparing revealing details, of course),

while Dream had shared his own personal experiences with George in return. This should be enough to meet up, right? But... on the other hand, a loss of animosity makes it *real* . It makes their shared experiences tangible. Now, he was being reckless. If he ever revealed himself, the recklessness would be unmasked as well.

George began writing. He had to be both honest to Dream, and himself.

Hi Dream :]

Percy Jackson? I wouldn't have thought you the type. I've never been a big Percy Jackson fan, but Greek Mythology has always been super interesting to me. I think Selene is really cool. Maybe because I really like the moon, because like you, my sleep schedule is also full of shit >:)

Also... you think I'm hot... damn take me out to dinner first smh.

Now... to answer your question... I think yes.

Probably not super soon, but yes Dream, I'd like to meet you. Jokes aside, we've become really good friends recently, and I'm glad for it. Eventually, I'll meet you. Fifty percent of the reason why I want to meet you is that we are friends. The other half is because I want to call you out on being a complete SIMP face to face.

Now, for a question for you... what is one hobby you do that you don't really tell people about? A secret talent, perhaps?

Have a great day as always Dream.

thanks for everything <3

- gogygogygogygogygogy

CLAY

Clay sat next to George in their Computer Science class.

They hadn't spoken at all since Saturday, much less on the events that had taken place.

Clay thought back on Saturday night when George had incidentally fallen asleep on top of him. Clay would never outwardly admit it, but he was well aware George was sleeping on him. In fact, he *relished* in it. The feeling of George laying on his chest, cheek pressed up against where his heart was, was addicting.

Part of him wondered if George woke up because his heart was beating so mind-numbingly quickly.

Nevertheless, now Clay was sitting, thumbs twiddling, as they went over the final code for their project.

Despite their initial squabbling, the boys had made more than sufficient progress. They were practically done, in fact.

Philza, their professor, walked up to the two. "This is coming along, boys!" he exclaimed, grinning.

"Yeah, we're a pretty good team, I think," George muttered. Clay turned sharply to look at him, but his head was hanging lowly.

"That you are. Proud of you lot!" he cheered before returning to the front of the class.

Clay felt his face warm. *Shit*.

"George?" he spoke up, half accidentally.

The brunet raised his eyes to look at him. "What's up?"

Clay chuckled to himself nervously. "I was wondering if you'd ever want to, like, hang out as

friends? I feel like our last interaction being me babysitting you is kind of weird.”

Good save, Clay thought to himself, not wanting to come off as if he was implying anything other than platonicism.

George smiled softly in response. “That sounds cool, Clay. Sure.”

Clay grinned in return, and the boys turned back to their computers to add the finishing touches to their code.

GEORGE

Perhaps it was out of pure giddiness, but George couldn’t keep his excited anxiousness to himself. During the period before lunch, George pulled out his phone.

***gogy:** dreammmmmmm*

It took all of five minutes for Dream to respond.

***dream:** what’s up,, kinda busy writing something so sorry if it takes me a sec to respond*

***gogy:** dw its np! what are u writing*

A couple of minutes passed before Dream began typing.

***dream:** that’s a secret.*

***gogy:** a secret?*

dream: i answer it in your most recent letter shhhh

George grinned to himself, a small twinge of excitement and impatience to read Dream's next letter coursing through his veins.

gogy: ohh mysterious are we

dream: that's my brand at this point gogs. anyways, how're u :D

gogy: happy!

dream: YAY why??

gogy: just went through an enemies to friends arc irl i think...

dream: woah how wattpad of you >:)

gogy: you WOULD be the kind of person to read wattpad huh

dream: fuck u it was a joke >://// on a side note though i have a song suggestion for you

The fact that Dream had found a song for him unprompted sent a surge of warmth through George's chest.

gogy: ooooooh do tell

dream: strawberry milk by deep sea peach tree :)

gogy: *ooh never heard of it, ill check it out :] i actually own a strawberry milk tee shirt... how fitting...*

dream: *when we meet u have to wear it hehehe*

“when”

George walked to the lunchroom, the smell of cheap pizza wafting through the air. He walked over to the group’s usual table - which was now his table as well - and sat in between Clay and Sapnap.

George felt a judging look land on him as his gaze wandered to Niki. The blonde had an eyebrow raised to him, eyes drifting between him and Clay. *Oh.*

George met her line of sight and surreptitiously shrugged. Niki nodded, seeming both surprised and unconvinced.

George grinned as Bad, one of the regulars of the table, arrived.

“Clay next to *George* ? What is this, April Fools?” Bad exclaimed in joking shock, sitting across from them at the table. George felt a twinge of concern as Clay seemed to shift uncomfortably in his seat next to him.

George giggled to himself, slightly awkwardly. “It’s a long story, Bad.”

“One that we will not be telling, by the way,” Clay interjected.

Niki seemed to hum in suspicion at this. “Hmm... interesting,” she said, laughter behind her words.

“Now, now, let’s not berate these boys with questions,” Sapnap began. “Instead, let’s talk about *me*

.”

“Sapnap got a boyfriend!” Clay chided.

Both Niki and Bad gasped in tow.

“What the hell, Clay? *I* was going to say it!” Sapnap retorted although he was clearly biting back a smile.

“Is it that sweater boy?” Niki asked, her soft voice cutting through Sapnap’s yelling like butter.

Sapnap nodded.

“Well, congrats, Sapnap! That’s awesome,” Bad said in response.

Their conversation eventually shifted elsewhere, George trying to pay attention as best he could to the quick-moving topics and discussions.

His focus had moved to something else, instead.

The efforts of his mind were now dead set on the tantalizingly large and lean tan hand currently sitting on his thigh.

Clay’s hand.

thirteen ○ skating lessons

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

CLAY

Clay's hand was on George's thigh.

Clay's *hand* was on George's *thigh* .

For something so blatantly unintentional it was so sickeningly intimate. Clay hadn't even realized his hand had instinctively fallen there. Throughout the bustle of the conversation, he just simply let his hand fall. It just so happened that the location was George's thigh.

He should've moved it. The second he realized, he should've stopped the situation completely. But, for whatever reason, he just *couldn't* .

Now that Clay realized where his hand was situated, however, more thoughts began plaguing his brain.

1) George hadn't shifted to move his hand off. *Why hadn't George pushed his hand off?*

2) This felt strangely natural. Despite the absurdity and unintentionality of the entire ordeal, Clay couldn't help but notice how intrinsic this felt.

3) His face was *burning* . Not the slight calidity one gets when they are embarrassed or get a small compliment, no no. It was fully *scorching* . It felt like there was a streamline of tangible fire going from where his hand was to his cheeks. Clay felt almost light-headed from the torridity of his face.

Clay refused to move his gaze from where it was locked onto a random spot on their table, intrinsically afraid that if he turned to look at George, the brunet would already be looking at him.

Clay was finally pulled out of his internal monologue by the sound of Niki's voice.

"Clay," she began, forcing him to move his line of sight towards Niki and away from the table.
"Are you okay?"

Clay was feverishly aware of his hand on George's thigh.

Burning.

No, Clay was *not* okay.

"Yeah, I'm fine," he lied. "Just tired." In response, Niki raised an eyebrow, clearly not buying it, but dropped the conversation anyway.

Then, the warmth dissipated.

George nudged his leg slightly, just enough so Clay's hand would fall. Quite honestly, however, Clay was not surprised. Clay leaving his hand there was *weird*. What was weirder, however was how long George took to force his hand off.

"Well," George began, breaking the silence, "I have to go to class. I'll see you all later." When Clay turned to look at him, his gaze was pointed towards anywhere but him. And *God* was his face red.

Did Clay have that effect on him?

Clay internally slapped himself for thinking such a stupid thought. Anyone would turn red out of discomfort if someone randomly situated their hand on their thigh. He was most likely blushing out of awkwardness, not fluster.

Still, a guy can Dream.

GEORGE

Maybe it was out of confusion, but George couldn't wipe the feeling of euphoria he felt with Clay's hand on his thigh from his mind.

He was currently sitting in the passenger seat of Sapnap's car, generic rap music flooding the speakers through the attached radio.

George turned to Sapnap as a (very clearly intentional) clearing of his throat interrupted the song.

"Yes?" George asked, brow raised.

Sapnap's eyes were obviously on the road, but even from his side profile George could see there was laughter swimming in them.

"So," the ex-Texan began, smirking behind the steering wheel, "What happened between you and Clay while I was gone?"

George's face instantly flushed. "Nothing, why?"

Sapnap giggled at this. Meanwhile, George was internally praying to whoever was listening that Clay hadn't told Sapnap... well... anything.

"Clearly not *nothing*, considering when I left it looked like you were both five seconds from running away, meanwhile when I returned y'all were looking at each other like you were fucking plastered."

George reminisced on the night, inherently smiling as he shook his head. "Nothing happened, like I said. It's as I told you, he simply just doesn't hate me."

"I don't buy it," Sapnap chided. "Clay's an audacious motherfucker. No way he doesn't pull some shit."

His hand . The eyeliner. Sleeping on him.

“Nope, nothing.”

George was lying through his teeth, and judging by the unamused look on Sapnap’s face, he was buying absolutely none of it.

“Enough about Clay, considering we’ve clearly hit a wall here. How’s that... um, guy you’re texting?” Sapnap asked, seeming genuinely curious.

“Dream?” George clarified, and Sapnap nodded. “He’s doing great. I think one day I’d eventually like to meet him.”

At this, Sapnap seemed to almost verbally *choke* .

“What?” George asked, concern now brewing in his chest.

“No, no, nothing,” Sapnap said, way too alarmingly quickly to be true.

“What’s wrong with me wanting to meet Dream?” Now, George was genuinely worried.

“ *Nothing* ,” Sapnap stressed again, although George still wasn’t buying his bullshit. “I’m just surprised, that’s all.”

“Why are you surprised?”

If George’s eyes weren’t deceiving him, Sapnap’s face almost looked as if it had turned *red* .

“No reason.”

There was *clearly* a reason that Sapnap wasn’t sharing, but George was too exhausted and flustered

from the earlier events that had taken place to fight with the headstrong brunet any longer.

George didn't know what had come over him.

Maybe, it was thoughts of Clay that he couldn't seem to push away. Maybe, it was sheer boredom.

Nevertheless, George found himself clumsily walking to the skatepark, Sapnap's board held tightly in front of his chest as if he was afraid to drop it (which, incidentally, he was).

It was 4 AM, which he knew from his various companions was prime skating time (specifically because no one was there).

George entered the gates of the skate park, faint memories of seeing Clay here alone skating to music one night. George carefully placed the board down and put one foot on it, trying as best he could to actually start skating with no avail.

Eventually, George made it onto the board, cruising for around two feet without falling. That was a win, at least in his book.

His mindless practicing was interrupted with the sound of the skate park gate opening.

Before George turned around, an idea formed in his head: *Dream said he came to the skatepark around this time- what if this was Dream?*

When George turned to the noise, however, his anxiety calmed.

It was just Clay.

George cursed himself for using the word "just" to describe Clay. He was anything but.

“George?” Clay asked, now having entered the skatepark. His voice sounded confused, but lower than usual, most likely from exhaustion.

“Yeah?” George asked, sounding all too impassive for someone who had just unexpectedly come face to face with someone he had *very* varying opinions on.

“Why are you-” the blond gestured to the area surrounding them.

“Honestly,” George answered, “I don’t quite know.”

Clay chuckled awkwardly before dropping his board down, much less gently than George had. “If you’d like,” he began, “I could try to teach you how to at least go farther than two feet. Because by the looks of it, you’re pretty shit.”

George rolled his eyes in fabricated annoyance. “You’re such an idiot.”

“So you *don’t* want me to help you?” Clay asked, a smug look on his face.

“Whatever,” George conceded, now biting back a smile from the proudly laughing boy before him.

CLAY

It was somehow already 6 AM.

Clay had spent almost two hours teaching George the basics of skateboarding, and *God* was it worth it.

George was clearly quite nervous on his board, thus Clay offered him some words of encouragement: “You don’t get to be afraid. Commit to whatever you’re doing. If you fall, that’s okay, I’ll catch you.”

George's face fading into a fiery red blush signified the words helped.

Not having to hide his genuine enjoyment with the boy was a breath of fucking fresh air. Seeing the way George's dimples formed and eyes crinkled as he smiled when he went a few feet forward on the board felt intoxicating.

Half out of wanting to impress George, half out of smugness, Clay began performing his more *advanced* tricks.

It started out with a simple enough frontside 180, and quickly escalated into things such as hardflips, laser flips, and beta flips.

By the end of his showing off, Clay turned to George who was watching, eyes agape.

"You're amazing, Clay."

Clay tried to ignore the absolute burst of euphoria in his stomach. "I know," he said, grinning smugly.

At this, George pushed him light heartedly.

As much as Clay wanted to stay doing whatever the boys were doing for a bit longer, they *both* had school soon.

"George, you should probably head back. Unlike me, you've got Sapnap on your case who's gotta give you a ride to school."

George looked almost disappointed. After a few moments, however, a brow raised on his forehead.

"Do you want to... I don't know," George began, chuckling awkwardly, "help me skate back to Sapnap's house? I'm kind of in a hurry anyways, so walking will probably be too slow. Plus, I could use the pointers."

Clay felt his eyes widen.

“I mean, sure!” he answered, all too eagerly from his flusteredness.

“Okay, cool,” George began, smiling lightly as the boys walked towards the exit.

“Cool,” Clay repeated.

God, he was fucking down bad.

GEORGE

George didn't know what sort of boldness had possessed him as they left the skatepark, but oh how he was regretting it.

The two boys skated back to Sapnap's house, George obviously going considerably slower, and Clay clearly trying to inconspicuously wait for him to catch up.

Every time George turned to Clay, Clay was already looking back, and *God* did it make George's face flush.

When they eventually got to Sapnap's house, Sapnap was standing outside of the front door with his arms crossed. When he noticed the boys pulling up, however, his arms dropped and he practically burst out into a cackle of laughter.

George turned to Clay embarrassedly as the blond raised a brow. “I don't get it, what's funny?” Clay asked, seeming genuinely confused.

George quickly shook his head. “Nothing,” he began, walking towards the door. “Sapnap's just an *idiot*.”

Sapnap was still laughing. George made a mental note to absolutely beat the shit out of him later.

“*I’m* the idiot? You’re the one who went out at 4 AM without telling me, for a *second* time, may I add!” Sapnap interjected, clearly amused by the entire ordeal.

George punched him on the shoulder, not strong enough that it could hurt, but enough so Sapnap could *act* like it did if he wanted fabricated pity. Considering Sapnap muttered out an “ow ,” George assumed he got his point across.

“I’m not gonna lie, I’m super confused,” Clay chided, laughing softly. “I should start skating to school now though, considering it’s already almost 6:45.”

George turned to Sapnap, who was already shaking his head. “Shut up, dude. I can drive you, it’s no big deal.”

“Are you sure?” Clay asked. George smiled to himself at the softness in the blond’s voice.

“Of course, brother.”

That is how the group of three ended up in Sapnap’s car, Sapnap driving, George in the back, and Clay in the front.

George, obviously, complained about having to sit in the middle seat, but was humored when he was given the aux.

George began playing the song Dream had recommended to him the day previous, Strawberry Milk by Deep Sea Peach Tree. George held in a giggle at the absurdity of the band name.

When the opening guitar notes flooded the car speakers, Clay swiftly turned to him.

“Holy shit, George, you know this song?” he exclaimed, somewhat grinning.

“Yeah,” George began, noticing a slight smile form on his own face, “A friend recommended it to me the other day.”

George heard Sapnap scoff at this, but he didn’t comment on it (he would force him to spill whatever secret he had some other time).

“Wow, that’s awesome. This is one of my favourite songs,” Clay said quietly, now turning back to the front window.

It seemed like it truly was a small world, and George was grateful for it.

Dream and Clay would get along , George thought absentmindedly.

Yeah, he assured himself , *they would*.

Chapter End Notes

OK BEFORE ANYONE COMMENTS ON IT, I KNOW THE LINE "Still, a guy can Dream." IS CRINGE BUT IDC I FIND IT HILARIOUS

decided to use lots of dramatic irony here >:)

fourteen ○ numbers

Chapter Notes

a slightly shorter chapter for today folks :) the next one will be longer though hehehe promise

also... the support from you guys has been insane. almost 8k hits?? what the heck?? im glad u guys are enjoying this so much, really :) means the world hehe <3 hope u enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

GEORGE

George opened his locker, giddy from nervous excitement to read the usual letter that was waiting for him. He quickly let his eyes dart over the page, unable to hold in a smile as he read.

Hellooooo Gogy,

First, I would like to say that you're a dumbass if you think Selene is cooler than other Greek gods / goddesses. The moon? Kinda cringe, not gonna lie. The sun on the other hand... hot af. (get it... hot... hahaha) Yes, I am a simp for Helios. No comment.

Corny jokes aside, I'm glad your sleep schedule is shit, cuz that lets us play Minecraft together and talk at abhorrent hours into the night >:) you enable me.

I'm happy you want to meet me :D if that means me being berated for being a simp, so be it.

As for my secret talent... I'd like to think I'm a pretty good writer :)

Despite my (kinda rough) exterior, I think I'm soft at heart. That might be -no, it definitely is- cliché, but I don't care. I've recently been super into poetry.

I'm sure you remember that... crisis... I had a while ago about liking dudes. I really like this guy, I think. Between you and me, I've been writing little poems about him. I just think he's cool :)

Now, that leads me to your question, Gogy: Do you have anyone special in your life? :) Tell me all about them if you do!

Thanks for the letter, you're cool Gogs :)

- Dreamie

Of course Dream was a writer. His cliché locker-letter stunt should've clued George into how much Dream was into dramatics. George grinned to himself; despite only knowing Dream for a few months, George was all too aware of how simply good of a person he was. Anyone would be lucky to have such a man head over heels for him.

George wondered if that was how Clay felt about *him*.

George had noticed quite a few similarities between the two: similar heights, parallel interests, and even the same demeanor.

Despite this, he had also noticed some distinct differences. Where Clay was skeptical and enigmatic, Dream was light-hearted and quick to affection.

George realized he couldn't wallow in his thoughts any longer, as he had a Comp Sci class to catch.

George walked through the doors of his classroom, easily spotting the mess of golden-brown hair on Clay's head and sitting next to him.

"Hey," Clay greeted, with a slight and soft smile. George offered a small wave in response as they turned to the professor to the front.

“Alright, class. Today, we’ll be focusing on perfecting the modification of data,” Philza started, blabbering on about something or other.

George couldn’t seem to focus on the man’s mess of words, however. He was too busy observing the man next to him. Eyes glued to the front of the screen, Clay’s side profile was more than prominent. Sharp jawline, strong bone structure, slightly crooked nose. He was perfect in the most flawed way. He was so noxiously *Clay*.

As if the blond was reading his mind, he turned sharply to the brunet. “Is there something on my face?” he asked, seeming genuinely concerned. George quickly shook his head.

“No, sorry, I just spaced out.”

Clay nodded, offering a small smile as he turned back to the professor.

By the end of the lesson, George felt completely and utterly plastered. The mix of incoherent lecturing from Philza, with the addition of Clay’s presence, was sickeningly tiring.

A familiar voice snapped him out of his thoughts, however.

“Hey, George, you okay?” Clay asked, worry in his eyes.

“Yeah, sorry. I don’t know what’s come over me today.”

Clay stared at him apologetically before his eyes instantly lit up. “That reminds me, I realized we never exchanged phone numbers!” he said, holding out his phone for George to take.

George did so, reluctantly. “Why do you need my number?” he asked, slightly dumbfounded.

Clay furrowed his brow. “Oh, sorry, I thought the other day you agreed to, like, hang out as homies one day. If not, that’s cool, man.”

George instantly shook his head. “No, no, yeah.”

Clay’s brow raised once again. “So is it a no, or a yeah?”

George chuckled to himself at his awkwardness. “Yeah, as in yeah, that sounds good. Sorry, I am completely and utterly out of it today.”

“Yeah, that’s what happens when you randomly show up to the park and learn to skate at 4 AM,” Clay joked, jabbing him lightly in the ribs.

“You’re an idiot,” George retorted light-heartedly.

“Oh come on now, that’s not very nice, is it?” Clay asked, feigning hurt.

George rolled his eyes. “You were the one who was ‘not very nice’ to me for weeks after we met,” George retorted, not meaning to sound as cold as he came across.

Instantly, he felt an unfamiliar feeling arise in his chest as Clay’s smile visibly dropped. George quickly tried to recover what he said.

“I was just joking, Clay, I didn’t mean-”

Clay laughed awkwardly, cutting him off. “Don’t worry George, I deserve it. I was an idiot.”

“Clearly,” George said, smiling.

“Fuck you, dude,” Clay responded, flipping George off. George could see a grin being bit back on Clay’s face, however.

No, George reasoned with himself, Clay was different than Dream.

He liked Dream, he did.

For Clay, however, he felt something else.

CLAY

Clay nervously twiddled his phone between his thumbs, something that had become customary for him in order to let out any excess energy. He quickly typed out something into Discord, hands practically shaking.

dream: gogy help gogy help

Gogy's icon lit up green as he quickly began typing.

gogy: whats up dream

are u okay???

dream: omg yea i dont want to worry u lol

i just wanna ask this guy out without like ... asking him out

gogy: go on...

dream: like ... chilling as friends until he eventually confesses his love for me type shit

gogy: *hmmmmmmmmmm i see i see*

Clay waited as patiently as he could until Gogy finally responded.

gogy: *i will be honest, i am very inexperienced with dating lol. but, if i were you, i'd pick someplace where you can do some sort of activity. bonding moments and shit like that.*

Clay nodded to himself. Despite his obvious reservations, Gogy seemed quite level-headed, and his advice was fairly decent.

dream: *ty gogy <3 i owe u one*

gogy: *ill make sure to drop my venmo next time before i give advice. I work by the hour btw*

dream: *i refuse to pay you*

gogy: *guess ill have to go to court then _('▽)_/*

dream: *there is literally a one in 7.5 TRILLION chance you would win that lawsuit*

gogy: *lies :T*

dream: *i have to go, but tysm for the advice fr*

gogy: *ofc :)*

Clay grinned to himself as he began typing out a message to George.

******_***_****:*** *hey george :) this is clay lol. ok, so about hanging out. thoughts on going to a zoo or something? i think that'd be pretty sick. lmk dude :)*

Hand practically shaking, he hit **SEND** .

GEORGE

George's breath inadvertently hitched as he picked up his phone to read the new message notification.

****_***_****: hey george :) this is clay lol. ok, so about hanging out. thoughts on going to a zoo or something? i think that'd be pretty sick. lmk dude :)*

George quickly added a contact name to Clay (he chose the *very* original name of “the clay guy” as his contact) and typed out a response.

george: hi! a zoo sounds pretty fun tbh- animals are cool :]

Read: 4:43 PM

Suddenly feeling a burst of embarrassment at his message, George continued.

george: nvm that sounds so cringey forget i said it :/

Almost immediately, the three grey dots appeared on his screen. After a few moments, Clay responded.

the clay guy: no it was not cringe, actually. animals are indeed very cool.

George giggled to himself, double tapping the message to like it.

Clay never ceased to surprise him, huh?

CLAY

It was a day after Clay and George had initially planned out their zoo “hangout,” mutually deciding to do it on the following Saturday.

Clay wandered to his locker, watching as the familiar scene of a piece of parchment with magenta ink came into view.

Clay read it, feeling his cheeks inherently go red.

hi dream!

The sun is cool, but you have just ruined it by making that stupid ass joke. I will never look at the sun the same again. Thanks for that.

Now... let's get to you being a writer...

HOLY SHIT???

I cannot believe you just dropped that on me. People who can write poetry are so fucking cool. That guy you are pining for better appreciate the poem or I'll punch them.

That is a joke, obviously, but still.

Let me know if you need any matchmaking help. Actually, maybe don't, considering I've barely had any relationships. Still, any service I may be of, feel free to ask.

I guess you could say there is a ... certain person in my life. They're awesome, at least sometimes. I don't know how to explain it, if I'm being honest. Anyways... back to you-

My question for you is... will you show me one of your works? :) obviously you don't have to. only if you want :)

Bye Dream,

- Gogy :]

Dream read and reread Gogy's message.

Surely, showing him one of the poems wouldn't hurt?

Dream quickly began writing, transcribing his yearning-filled words onto notebook paper.

He knew he could trust Gogy.

There was nothing to be afraid of in showing him his writing, yet, he couldn't shake an unreadable feeling from his stomach.

Dear Gogy, -

Chapter End Notes

hi! if u enjoyed / have an ideas/comments/criticism/whatever, feel free to comment / leave kudos :)) i appreciate the support so much and ily all! /p - remember to drink water, get some sleep, and take time for yourself <3

just want to say that i will try to add the next chapter as soon as possible, but i don't want to rush it especially because it's so important for the plot. hope to update soon :) ty for all the love <3

fifteen ○ they were theirs

Chapter Notes

long time no see! here's a new chapter so i don't put y'all completely in a writing drought hehe :)

jokes aside, thank you for 9k hits... holy shit... the support for this story has been absolutely mental <3 ty all so much, ily /p

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

GEORGE

It was somehow already Friday, and George had been eagerly waiting for Dream's next letter. The past few days, his locker had been empty, and thus George presumed that Dream was debating whether or not to send George a piece of his work. George obviously couldn't blame him; not wanting to share something so personal was valid. Still, George couldn't help but be intrigued.

When George opened his locker, however, he was pleasantly surprised to find a letter from Dream, along with a folded-up sheet paper-clipped onto it. Curiously, George began reading.

Hi Gogy,

Sorry it took me so long for this letter to get to you. I found myself writing and rewriting this tons of times. This is the first time I've been genuinely nervous to send you a letter. Strange, huh?

Also, Gogs, don't think I'm letting you off that easy. You said: "I guess you could say there is a ... certain person in my life..." You gotta tell me more. You've intrigued me now.

I guess this is the point where I send you one of my works. It's attached to the back of this page. If you want, any criticism is welcome (I'm planning on... maybe sharing this with someone, so I need it to be perfect).

Once you read, here's my question for you: tell me about the person you like. I like hearing people talk about people they care about :)

Ok, now you can read the poem I wrote haha. Sorry for making you wait so long.

- Dream :))

George smiled despite himself before detaching the second note and unfolding it.

Written in neater-than-usual ink was a poem, the title “unmasked” sprawled across the top of the page. George then began reading.

UNMASKED

*When I first saw you,
I masked my interest with impassivity,
Acting as if I hated you
So that you might see me as undesirable.*

*Yet, you continued to be graceful.
How fucking unfair, that you could be
So kind, when I was so vicious.
It shows how truly good you are.*

*I tried to find out why you entranced me,
Why your image burned into my brain.
I have realized I do not need a reason to feel this way,*

I can simply let it occur.

I felt trapped, trying to hide how I feel.

We feel like early mornings on concrete and

Late nights spent typing.

We feel like smug glances shared and

Lingering touches.

We feel like stupid jokes and

Unbroken promises.

We feel like Us.

George felt his mouth inadvertently gasp, stung by the words Dream had written. Despite being composed by a completely different person, and written for a man that wasn't him, George couldn't help but be personally moved by Dream's words.

They were beautiful, and they were his. Even if they weren't George's, he would act as if they were. He couldn't help but imagine it being read by someone- someone with golden hair and an overbearing smile. The poem was theirs.

They were theirs.

CLAY

Clay stood, thumbs twiddling, in front of Sapnap's door. He was here to pick up George; usually, he would've just skated to the Zoo, but realistically George wouldn't be able to go more than a block before falling and eating concrete on the pavement.

Sapnap, who was practically doubled-down in laughter when Clay explained his and George's plans, offered for Clay to take his car to the Zoo. Clay, albeit not the *best* driver, still accepted; he trusted himself at least enough not to crash the car.

So, there Clay was, gingerly knocking on his friends' door. His heart was beating quickly and anxiously, as if he hadn't been here dozens of times before.

Clay took this moment of waiting to reassess what he was wearing; he was adorned with a polo-collared, green, long-sleeved shirt and blue, 90's-cut Levi's. He was wearing his black converse, not wanting to stray too far from his usual style for a hangout that was, much to his distaste, purely platonic.

After a few seconds, the door swung open to reveal a brightly-grinning George. He was wearing a beige tweed pullover with brown slacks, as well as his own black Converse. *We're matching*, Clay thought smugly to himself, before quickly shaking his head to rid himself of his thoughts.

"Cute outfit," George commented casually.

Immediately, Clay's eyes widened. "Sorry?" he clarified, voice much too surprised for the nonchalance of George's compliment.

In turn, the brunet simply shrugged. "I just said your outfit was cute," he assured, with what was almost notable as concern lacing his voice.

"Right, right," Clay said, trying to make a smooth recovery as he led George to Sapnap's car. Clay jumped into the front seat, hooking his phone up to the auxiliary cord once he buckled his seat-belt.

Once Clay set the car into gear, he hit shuffle on his playlist. Immediately, the opening notes of "Warsh_Tippy and Zelda" by *Whatever, Dad* flooded the car. Clay incidentally winced out of embarrassment at the soft lyrics, but as he went to grab his phone to switch the song, a gentle touch stopped him in his tracks.

Clay's eyes glanced down from the road just quickly enough to register George's hand stopping his.

"Don't switch it, I like this song," the brunet breezily protested as he removed his hand from Clay's. Where George touched his wrist burned, as if his fingers were branding Clay's skin. Nevertheless, he abided by George's wishes and let the song reverberate through the car.

Clay smiled to himself as he heard George softly singing the lyrics to himself.

“Last night

I dreamt we did our laundry together

And we were singing the same song

While we folded our clothes”

Clay and George spared glances at each other, and Clay couldn't help but giggle at the domesticity of the entire ordeal; Clay driving along, sneaking looks at George who was sitting in the passenger seat and clearly doing the same. It felt raw, and it felt familiar. It felt like it was theirs.

“As I recall

You looked like a total doofus

Which is pretty accurate

So, I woke up feeling sad

'Cause it never happened.”

Clay had to remind himself: this wasn't *theirs*. It was his, and George was simply there along with him. However much Clay yearned for more, their relationship would stay purely platonic.

But, as the song faded out, another took its place, and Clay and George were smiling softly to each other, Clay realized that it being just them was enough.

GEORGE

George followed behind Clay giddily as they headed towards the zoo entrance. George had obviously been to one before, but he had never been to one quite as large as the Central Florida Zoo.

Immediately, upon walking towards the entrance, the boys were met with comically large statues

of alligators, elephants, and snakes.

George wasn't blind to the small glances and light touches the boys had shared throughout the car ride. He wanted to blame it on the humidity, but his face had practically burnt up several times during their drive there.

"Hurry up, George!" Clay called out, now already veering towards the ticketing booth. George did as he was told, jogging to where Clay was standing. "One adult and one kid, please," Clay told the cashier, a smug grin plastered onto his face.

"I am *not* a-" George began, but was interrupted as the woman checking the two out spoke up.

"Here are your tickets, sir. Hope you and your little friend enjoy your stay!" she said, a clearly fabricated smile on her face.

When the boys walked away, finally out of earshot, George nudged him in the ribs. "I can't believe you told her I was a child."

Clay, smirk still present on his face, chuckled. "Whatever, man. It isn't my fault you can pass as a 14-year-old. Plus, the ticket was \$5 cheaper, so seems like a win-win to me."

George rolled his eyes and groaned, but conceded nonetheless. "Okay, whatever. Now, where should we go first?"

Clay smiled at him, sincerity replacing his previous smugness. "It's your choice. Or, I can just start walking and we can go from there."

Something about his soft tone sent a rush of heat to George's face. He was internally praying he wasn't blushing, even though he knew realistically that that may have been the case.

"Start walking, Florida-man," he began, laughing softly. "I'll follow you wherever you want to go."

The blonde's smile persisted as he raised an eyebrow curiously. "Wherever?"

“Yup. Wherever.”

Chapter End Notes

hope you enjoyed!! if you want to leave any comments/kudos, they are sooo appreciated (but obviously not necessary! just reading it is more than enough :)).

sorry this chapter is so short- i needed it to be an introductory chapter for the zoo (which will be next chapter) because that is kinda drama filled lol :)

remember to drink water, eat food, and take time for yourself. you are loved, and you are valid <333

sixteen ○ sapphire and chartreuse

Chapter Notes

here y'all go ;) hope u enjoy

just wanna say before i start (hiclaire sappy era LMAO) ty for 10k hits??>(\$# wtf?? it's so crazy to me that y'all are enjoying this story so much, and i am so thankful for all of your support :) love y'all /p

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

CLAY

Clay and George walked shoulder-to-shoulder towards the reptile exhibit, Clay's first chosen destination for the boys at the zoo. Clay was more than aware of every small detail of his situation: his and George's hands lightly brushing as they walked every so often, the small piece of paper in the back pocket of his jeans, the loud bantering from the other zoo-goers around them.

Clay had never been one for large crowds; that much was evident from his overreaction to Karl's party a couple of months back. Still, something about George's presence calmed him. It was the same sensation he got reading the advice Gogy had written him so long ago.

"Is this it?" George asked, breaking the silence between the two as they approached the building housing the various reptiles and amphibians alike.

"Yup," Clay responded, chuckling lightly as he opened the door and held it so George could go through first.

"What a gentleman," George exclaimed, clearly semi-sarcastically.

Clay giggled, "I try."

As the boys walked through the exhibit, Clay watched as George became entranced in a certain animal: the Panther Chameleon. His eyes were dead set on the creature, as if it intrigued him greatly.

“The panther chameleon, huh?” Clay questioned, curious.

George’s once-locked gaze moved to look at him as he shrugged. “It kinda reminds me of you, actually.”

Clay cocked his head inquisitively. “Why’s that?”

“Dunno. It changes colors, and your personality has changed a lot since I first met you. So, I guess that’s why,” George responded, tone inching towards nervousness as he rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly.

Clay instinctively raised his eyebrow. “That’s a good thing, I hope?”

George nodded and sighed simultaneously. “Very good thing.”

“You know, George,” Clay began, a teasing look in his eyes. “You don’t have to go all *poetic* to compliment me. You can just say you like me,” he joked, trying and failing to stifle his laughter.

“As if,” George retorted, light-heartedly elbowing Clay in the waist.

Yeah, Clay thought to himself, *as if*.

It wasn’t common for Clay to be flustered. The token “mysterious lone-wolf” of Manberg High, he relished in his difficult-to-obtain “cool” reputation. With George, however, this front was easily penetrated. Every time he caught George glancing at him, watched him smile, or heard him laugh, Clay’s heart would instinctively jump at the sensation.

Damn, Clay was whipped.

Clay led George to their second destination, the butterfly garden.

Admittedly, it wasn't his *preferred* area of the zoo per se, but after George inconspicuously pointed out the exhibit as they looked at the map, Clay took the hint that they should probably go there next.

When the two boys eventually arrived, Clay once again held the door open for George.

"This is going from chivalry to downright *simpery*, Clay," the brunet commented light-heartedly as he walked through.

"Well, what can I say?" Clay responded back, hoping to rid himself of the blush he could feel incoming on his face

As Clay followed George through the entrance, the tang of honeysuckle and lemongrass filled his senses. As if George was reading his mind, he spoke up.

"It smells lovely in here," he commented, walking a few feet in front of Clay.

"George, come here," Clay said softly, picking up a cotton swab that was laid out with sugar water on it. "If you hold one of these, or rub it somewhere on your skin, the butterflies will land on you."

At this, George gingerly took the item from Clay and rubbed it on his hand. Clay reached out his own instinctively, a sigh of relief slipping out as George took the cotton swab and rubbed the remnants of the sugar water on Clay's knuckles as well.

Clay flashed George a smile as the boys continued through the garden.

After a few minutes of George enthusiastically calling out and pointing each time he noticed a colorful insect on the plants surrounding them, a Common Olivewing landed delicately on the top of Clay's hand.

"George," he whispered, quiet so as not to startle the entrancing insect on his knuckles, "look."

Clay couldn't help but smile as he noticed the brunet's eyes practically light up. Something inside of him swelled with pride that it was somewhat his doing that George looked so goddamn *happy* .

Clay was interrupted in his thoughts as a slender hand lightly brushed his.

"Can I?" George asked softly, doe-like eyes looking up to meet Clay's.

The blond slightly nodded, unsure exactly what George was asking but prepared to offer whatever the brunet desired.

George slid his hand lightly over Clay's, remaining unmoving until the butterfly crawled from Clay's hand onto George's. When he finally moved it away, Clay couldn't shake the lingering warmth from his fist.

If George was smiling before, now, he was practically *beaming* . His umber eyes were sparkling with something Clay couldn't quite place as his gaze shifted between the butterfly and the blond.

"You know," George said, breaking the silence. "This butterfly kind of reminds me of us."

Clay took a second to observe the creature and realized George was so substantially and sickeningly right.

The outer side of the wing was tinted a blindingly lime green, with stripes and circles of white, black, and brown on the outer corners. On the inside, however, was a phenomenal mix of blue and black, the cerulean practically glowing compared to the shadowy color encircling it.

Clay let his eyes wander back towards George who was staring at him as if he was waiting for Clay to do something.

"You're something else, George," Clay responded, grinning brightly as he shook his head.

At this, the butterfly promptly fluttered away, the sapphire and chartreuse disappearing from

vision.

“Is that a good thing?” George asked, a smug grin staying stagnant on his face.

“Of course,” Clay responded, playing along with his own slightly pompous smile.

George elbowed him lightly in the side - it was becoming a common response to Clay’s remarks - as a giggle echoed off of the man’s lips.

The boys continued through the garden, exchanging unknowing glances and light laughter while colorful insects ghosted their skin. The green of the surrounding shrubbery reflected onto George’s olive skin, Clay trying (and failing) not to stare at the tantalizing man beside him.

When the boys finally exited the exhibit, George smiled at Clay gleefully.

“That was fun,” he said softly.

“Yeah,” Clay exhaled, gaze unbreaking from the brunets.

They stood like that for a few moments before Clay jerked away and turned around.

“Okay!” he exclaimed, already walking in a new direction. “Onto the next exhibit!”

GEORGE

George’s skin still felt aurelian where his and Clay’s hands touched earlier in the butterfly garden.

George was attempting boldness, and every time he did so, he was relieved to see Clay reciprocate the same. Yet, there was still an unshakable twinge of uncertainty molten in his chest.

George was currently trailing behind Clay, the blond hurriedly leading him to an unknown location.

“Why won’t you tell me where we’re going?” George groaned, trying and succeeding to hide his excitement.

“It’s a surprise!” Clay supplied, turning his face just enough to offer George a grin, coupled with a slight wink.

George was internally glad Clay turned back around to face their destination, because at Clay’s wink, his face was practically painted with redness.

George was very much “down bad,” as Sapnap would say.

After a couple minutes of walking, Clay slowed at the entrance of a den-shaped doorway.

“Ta-da!” the blond exclaimed, an enthusiastic-looking grin on his face.

George let himself acknowledge the way his heart practically squeezed at how damn contented Clay looked. *He looks pretty when he’s excited* , George noted to himself.

George glanced up as he read the sign above the entrance. “‘The lion’s den’?” he read aloud with an eyebrow cocked.

The blond nodded brusquely. “Yup,” he responded, popping the ‘p’.

George noticed how his mouth moved as he spoke. It was quick and aggressive, and George’s mind immediately flashed to the night of Karl’s party when he was so incredibly plastered that he and Clay kissed.

A part of him wished that he could feel that again- a *large* , overbearing, emphatic part of him.

George realized he had been lost in his thoughts as he nearly tripped following Clay into the exhibit.

“You okay?” the taller asked, something paralleling concern in his eyes.

George nodded, internally warming at the caring nature of the blond. “Yeah, sorry, just kinda zoned out.”

“Don’t apologize, idiot,” Clay said light-heartedly, a smile and an unreadable look in his eyes plastered on his face.

As the two continued on into the room, they walked up to a large panoramic window that mirrored the habitat of the lions.

Inside housed two male lions, beautifully tantalizing, laying next to each other on a flat rock.

“They’re so beautiful,” George commented, eyes wide as he took in the creatures before him.

George’s neck practically shot to the side as he swore he heard the blond mumble “so are you” next to him.

“What did you say?” he asked, sure he had misheard.

Immediately, George watched as Clay’s face turned a bright crimson. “You heard that? I- I didn’t, shit-”

George interrupted Clay’s nervous stuttering with a loud chuckle of laughter. Clay stood looking at him dumbfounded, and after a few moments, began giggling along as well.

“Oh my god,” George exclaimed, laughter still following his words. “You really *are* a simp.”

Clay rolled his eyes, but the very obvious blush on his face still persisted. “Oh come on now,” the blond began, clearly trying to use smugness to recover from his previous actions. “Okay, well, to be

fair, was I wrong?"

Now, it was George's turn to blush. "You are literally an idiot," he protested, Clay giggling to himself signifying he didn't exactly buy George's fabricated disdain.

George let his attention shift back to the lions sunbathing before the two.

George had the inclination to lightly tap the glass, and as he does, the two lions shift to move closer to the boys.

"I think they like you," Clay commented quietly.

"Their manes kinda match your hair," George heard himself say. If he was a less impulsive man, he would've stopped himself, but considering Clay had just called George "beautiful," he found difficulty being embarrassed.

"You called the lions beautiful, and just said I look like a lion, so does that mean I'm beautiful by association?" Clay asked smugly, feigning pain as George lightly flicked his forehead.

"You're so stupid, Clay," George said, rolling his eyes and failing to hide his incoming smile.

"Takes one to know one, dipshit," Clay retorted, a gleaming grin on his face as well.

The boys exited the exhibit with fingers lightly brushing next to each other and identical smiles on their faces.

George and Clay headed towards the main pavilion and George excused himself to use the restroom.

"Don't miss me too much!" the blond called out before George promptly turned to flip him off.

When George entered the bathroom, the first thing he did was splash his face with cold water to rid himself of the somehow both ever persisting and soon encroaching blush.

After his face had begun air-drying, he pulled out his phone and opened Discord. Surprisingly, Dream was already typing.

After a few seconds, a message went through.

Dream: *i am down so horrendously bad for this dude, you don't even know*

George chuckled to himself.

Gogy: *unfortunately, i am very familiar with the feeling. go on... what's happening...*

Dream: *i can't tell if i'm on a date or not >:((*

George knew what Dream was experiencing. In fact, he was dealing with it at the moment.

Gogy: *you could always... idk.. ask?*

Dream: *but if he says no it would be so awkward ahhhh*

Gogy: *wait for the right moment! good luck dream :] let me know when he falls head over heels for you and you have a new bf ;P*

Dream: *jesus christ gogy, i need ur confidence, i am so nervous LMAO. i wasted so much time being a dick to him when i could've just asked him out.*

Gogy: *it'll be fine! i believe in u >:[*

Dream: *ugh ty <3 i owe u, dude*

Gogy: *don't mention it- now go get ur man hehehe*

George giggled lightly to himself as he put his phone back in the pocket of his slacks. It continuously surprised him how incredibly similar his and Dream's lives were; it was nice to have a friend who understood what he was going through.

When he left the bathroom, Clay was twiddling his phone in his hands hyperactively with an unreadable expression on his face. When his gaze lifted towards George, a tantalizing smile took its place.

"George!" he called out, grinning sheepishly.

"That's me," he smiled back.

"I'm starving. Do you wanna get food?"

George nodded as he followed Clay towards wherever the hell they were going. George realized with Clay, however, he didn't really mind.

The boys sat at a café table, seats veering towards stiffly uncomfortable as the smell of coffee wafted through the air.

George noticed how Clay grimaced. "You okay?" he asked, a slight parallel to when George had zoned out only a little while earlier.

"Yeah," Clay explained, "Just not a huge fan of the smell of coffee."

George nodded as he smiled softly. “Do you want to see if there’s somewhere else to eat, then?”

Clay shook his head insistently. “I can cope,” he said with a smile.

George took the hint that Clay didn’t plan on leaving and instead of bickering opted to read the menu.

As his eyes scanned over the page, his heart practically lurched as he felt something touch his left hand. His gaze moved from the menu to where he felt the touch and realized not only was Clay touching his hand, but he was fidgeting with his fingers.

Clay’s eyes were set on the menu, so it was most likely an instinctive action, but George’s gaze was locked on their practically interlocked hands.

Clay started fidgeting with his fingers more sprightly, and George let out a slight surprised exhale.

At this, Clay’s hand moved away as he seemingly realized what he was doing. “Shit, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to do that. It was just impulse, I guess,” he explained, shifting with what looked like discomfort in his chair.

George shook his head. “I don’t mind if you fidget with my hand, really,” he said, offering his hand forwards.

Clay looked both surprised and confused, but still took it nonetheless. “George, you are too fucking nice,” he said with an elated-looking smile.

“Maybe, or maybe it’s just to you,” George said, words slipping out before he could stop them.

Surprisingly, however, Clay’s smile only grew at this.

There was no verbal response, but when Clay’s grip on George’s hands tightened, he got the message all the same.

CLAY

The boys had been at the zoo for hours now, and they both collectively decided they were too exhausted and their legs were too tired to continue.

“I think society would be better if you were allowed to skateboard through zoos,” Clay announced as they hopped into the car.

“I think society would be better if you weren’t such an idiot,” George retorted light-heartedly as he climbed through the passenger’s seat.

Clay started the ignition and the comfortable hum of Sapnap’s car began as George plugged his phone into the aux cord.

“Taking music privileges, I see,” Clay commented as he headed towards the zoo parking lot exit.

“Obviously,” the brunet responded, clicking through something on his phone as the music began.

Clay instantly recognized the song, along with the memories that came along with it.

I Know The End by Phoebe Bridgers

Clay let himself hum along with the song as they started towards the highway.

“So, still not your music then?” George asked, interrupting the music.

“Huh?” Clay asked, clearly confused.

“When I first heard you listening to this, that one day at the skatepark,” George explained, “You

were being all cocky, like, ‘This isn’t *my* music. A friend sent it to me,” George jokingly intimidated, laughing lightly.

“I was such an idiot, before, Jesus Christ,” Clay said, giggling as well as he internally facepalmed at his previous standoffish behavior.

“Yeah, clearly. You still never explained to me *why* , though,” George said, his tone sounding more like curiosity rather than disdain.

Clay sighed to himself as he focused his vision towards the road. “Would you kill me if I said I can’t really tell you *why* yet?”

George didn’t respond for a moment, the soft music acting as an interlude between the conversation. “Clay, you can take all the time you want. Genuinely.”

Clay couldn’t ignore the way his heart fluttered at George’s words.

The boys continued talking about anything and everything until Clay eventually pulled up to Sapnap’s house.

“This is where I bid you farewell, my liege,” Clay said, using a terribly bad British accent and feigning classiness.

“You are such an idiot,” George said with a giggle, still remaining in his seat.

Clay thought back to his discussion with Gogy.

Wait for the right moment... and simply ask if it's a date or not .

It took practically every fiber of Clay’s usual confidence to continue as he exhaled deeply.

“George, is this a-”

“Was this a-”

The boys spoke at the exact same time, leaving them both to chuckle out of surprise.

“Okay, you go first,” Clay pushed.

George shook his head assertively. “You go, trust me.”

“*George*,” Clay complained, “Mine is sort of a big question. You should go first.”

“So is mine!” George protested.

“Please?” Clay asked, pulling a comically stereotypical pout on his face.

George groaned as he rolled his eyes. “Fine, but I have a feeling you’ll regret this. Just, promise we’re still okay if the answer is no.”

Clay nodded, signifying for George to continue.

“Was this,” the brunet started, rubbing the back of his neck sheepishly. “Was this a date?”

Clay’s mouth hung open dumbfoundedly. “Holy shit,” he muttered to himself.

George’s eyes widened as he began fiddling with the car door. “Was that a no? Sorry, shit, I think I read this wrong-”

“George,” Clay interrupted, putting a hand on his shoulder to keep George in the car. “I was literally going to ask the same thing,” he said, a giggle starting to manifest in his chest.

George's shoulders seemed to relax and Clay removed his hand as the brunet sighed with what sounded like relief. "Well," he started, "is it?"

Clay thought for a moment before responding. "Do you want it to be?" he asked with his classic smug grin.

Clay's heart tugged as a smile grew on George's face as well. "You're such an idiot."

"I'll take that as a yes, then," Clay said, smirking.

Clay was growing increasingly aware of the clandestine piece of paper hidden surreptitiously in his pants pocket.

Clay sighed as he pulled out the folded piece of paper.

"Take this," he said, as he handed the note to the boy.

As George began unfolding it, an eyebrow raised out of apparent curiosity, Clay stopped him. "Read it when you're inside."

George nodded, eyes full of elation. Clay blushed at the fact that *he* was why he looked like this.

George waved tentatively as he exited Sapnap's car. Once Clay watched him walk towards the doorway, Clay left the vehicle as well.

"Bye, Georgie!" he called out grinning as he began walking away towards his own house.

"You're an idiot!" the brunet called back as Clay ran around the corner.

Once the house was out of sight, Clay pulled out his phone.

Dream: HEY GOGY.

IT WAS A DATE!!!

Chapter End Notes

alternate chapter title: 3314 words of dnf fluff LMAO

hope u enjoyed :DD we're coming up on the more interesting chapters now hehe :) as always, any comments, kudos, bookmarks, whatever are sooo appreciated :) hope you have a great day! ily <3

also unrelated but someone bookmarked this as "Great fic w skater bad boy dream having a breakdown arc and gogy being george" and that made me laugh LMAO y'all are great

seventeen ○ left on read

Chapter Notes

thank you all for all the support, genuinely :)) i started this story because i was bored, lol, and the fact that y'all genuinely enjoy it has helped break me from my writer's block, so thanks for that !! love y'all the most /p

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

GEORGE

George practically skipped into Sapnap's house, a smile glued to his face. His feelings were only proliferating with the subtle confirmation of *reciprocation*. The idea that Clay might be interested in more than what they already had was intoxicating.

George pulled out the piece of folded-up paper Clay had given him; judging by his insistent need for George to read it when they were separate, it was seemingly important. George considered reading it right then and there, but decided against it; he would do it at a more significant time when the note had his full attention.

As he entered the living room, Sapnap offered him a knowing glance.

"So," the man began, "how was your date?" An obnoxious-looking smirk was paired with his words.

"Amazing," George exhaled contentedly, giddy on admiration and curiosity.

Sapnap cocked his head confusedly. "Are you not gonna go all," he began, imitating George with an awfully insulting British accent. "'Oi', mate, s'not a date, innit."

George rolled his eyes at his embarrassment of a housemate, but couldn't hide the grin on his face. He cocked an eyebrow at Sapnap smugly.

“Wait-” he began, eyes widening. “Are you guys actually...”

When Sapnap finally caught up to what was going on, George nodded eagerly. “I’m pretty sure we both mutually agreed it was a date.”

Sapnap flashed him a grin, slapping him on the back with support. “Nice going, dude, holy shit!”

Sapnap waited a few moments before continuing. “Did you two-” he started, pantomiming, hugging himself, and making annoyingly loud kissy-noises.

George elbowed him lightly. “No, and fuck off,” he responded with a laugh.

“Well, I’m *slightly* pissed that Clay didn’t text me to let me know, but whatever. I’m assuming you figured out your-”

Sapnap’s words fell short, and George felt unnaturally scrutinized as the brunet began staring at him with contemplation.

“Figured out my *what* ?” George encouraged, not sure if the pit-like feeling that was beginning to grow in his stomach was curiosity or concern.

“The Dream thing,” Sapnap continued, an eyebrow raised.

Now, it was George’s turn to look at him pensively. “What do you mean? What does Dream have to do with this?”

At George’s confused response, the other promptly shook his head. “Fuck, never mind, forget I said anything.”

“No, what is it?” George prodded, his inquisitiveness now spiraling into frustration.

“I- you can’t...” Sapnap stammered, face red with what George assumed was embarrassment. “Nevermind, I just spaced out.”

George didn't buy Sapnap's pitiful excuse - and judging by the sheepish nature of Sapnap rubbing his neck, the boy was well aware of this - but dropped the conversation for now. *If need be*, he thought to himself, *I can force Sapnap to tell me later*.

After a while, the boys parted ways and George retreated into his bedroom.

He took off his slacks and jumper - they were getting uncomfortable after a long day of walking - and instead pulled on an oversized back sweatshirt and pyjama pants.

George collapsed onto his bed, phone and folded letter in hand.

He opened his phone, hoping to play some sort of music in the background as he read. While he sorted through his applications, he noticed an unopened Discord notification.

"I'll deal with that later," he mumbled to himself as he pressed play on a song he had listened to countless times before, "Fool" by Frankie Cosmos.

Once the music faded in, George gingerly began unfolding the note.

On the top of the page, read "unmasked," in eerily familiar handwriting. He very much recognized it, but was unsure exactly from where. Doodles of hearts and smiley faces covered the page, and George smiled to himself at the surprising but not unwelcome innocence of Clay. This smile quickly dropped, however, as he began reading.

UNMASKED

for georgie :)

When I first saw you,

I masked my interest with impassivity,

Acting as if I hated you

So that you might see me as undesirable.

Yet, you continued to be graceful.

How fucking unfair, that you could be

So kind, when I was so vicious.

It shows how truly good you are.

I tried to find out why you entranced me,

Why your image burned into my brain.

I have realized I do not need a reason to feel this way,

I can simply let it occur.

I felt trapped, trying to hide how I feel.

We feel like early mornings on concrete and

Late nights spent typing.

We feel like smug glances shared and

Lingering touches.

We feel like stupid jokes and

Unbroken promises.

We feel like Us.

you make me very happy, george. i really fucking hope you feel the same way

- clay <3

George had read this before.

George had fucking read this before.

The initial thought he had was that Clay had plagiarized Dream. Perhaps, Clay somehow knew Dream and had asked him to write a sappy love poem to George. Or, maybe he somehow saw Dream's letter and copied it.

But, no.

That couldn't be right.

The handwriting was too similar. The words were too familiar. The smiley faces and bittersweet banter and forgotten memories all screamed *Clay*.

No, George thought to himself, *Clay could not have been Dream*.

There had to have been a more logical conclusion to be drawn from this. Instinctively, George pulled open his phone to Discord, hoping to find any minor discrepancy he could find that would prove Dream and Clay were not the same person.

He found nothing.

Every message, every music recommendation, every stupid emoticon, every small anecdote, every sliver of information, lined up perfectly.

Then, George's eyes dropped to the most recent message from Dream.

Dream: HEY GOGY

- 32 minutes ago

IT WAS A DATE!!!

Fuck.

At this point, it was inconceivable that this endeavor was simply a colossal fluke. Dream was so

sickeningly *Clay* , and Clay infuriatingly *Dream* .

George internally swat himself senseless for his idiocy. *How had he been so fucking blind?*
Everything Dream had told him was insatiably similar to every experience he had shared with Clay.
It was as if the Universe was mocking him for being so moronic.

Then, another question sparked his mind: *Did Clay, Dream, know?*

Surely he did . The situation was glaringly obvious; unless one was as much of an oblivious fool as George was, the similarities were unmistakable.

George practically jumped at the sound of a text notification.

New Message Notification:

the clay guy

George weakly laughed to himself, forgetting he had left the man with such a trivial contact name.

The weight of his situation, however, soon set in once again. George winced as he opened the message.

the clay guy: did you read the note :P no rush :))

George couldn't reply. Not *now* . Not after one of his best friends for the past few months turned out to be the standoffish man he had been practically fawning over.

Almost immediately, he got another Discord notification.

Dream .

Of-fucking-course.

***Dream:** hey gogy,, you're probably busy rn (which is okay!! :)) but i need to vent for a sec (you don't have to respond if you're in the middle of something). you know that poem i showed you? the one for the guy i like? so... i gave it to him. he hasn't said anything. i feel like somehow i went too far. maybe he was joking about it being a date?? idk. I trust u a lot, so i guess i'm coming to you for advice... or just a place to rant. idk if the poem was too much, or maybe he just didn't like it. who the hell knows. he read my message, too, when i asked if he read it. fuck, i just realized how long this message is. sorry for the paragraph... lol.... anyways, im kinda scared :/// hope you're doing okay and that your thing with the guy you like is going better than mine LMAO. love u lots gogy :((pray for me lol*

Holy shit.

Not only were Clay and Dream clearly the same person - that much was more than proven by Dream's- Clay's?- wall of text - but Clay didn't know that Gogy and George were interchangeable.

They were both oblivious fucking *idiots* .

George, quite honestly, had no idea how the *fuck* to go about this. Does he text him immediately and explain his identity? Does he respond as usual and feign ignorance?

Then, his brain flashed back to Sapnap's slip-up earlier.

"I'm assuming you figured out your Dream thing."

Sapnap fucking *knew* .

George practically stormed out of his room, slamming the door behind him. In his state of frustration, edging towards rage, he didn't even flinch at the loud noise it made.

"Hey, what the hell, dude?" Sapnap exclaimed, sitting on the couch in the room before him.

George scoffed; he wasn't in the mood to humor Sapnap.

“*I’m* the one who should be asking, ‘What the hell,’ Sapnap.”

He could feel a glint of anger grow in his chest; George was pissed, and he was more than welcome to make it Sapnap’s problem.

“What do you mean?” Sapnap asked. George could sense there was anxiety growing in his tone. *Sapnap knew he was guilty.*

“You fucking *knew!*” George exclaimed. “You knew Clay was Dream!”

Sapnap’s shoulders immediately sagged. “Well, yeah, dipshit,” he exhaled. “It was *pretty* fucking obvious!”

George gasped insultedly, but couldn’t ignore the small voice in his head saying that Sapnap was right. It *was* obvious.

George sighed, pressing his hand to his temple. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

The brunet shrugged. “It wasn’t my information to tell, I guess.”

“Well,” George began, shaking his head. “What do I do now?”

Sapnap sighed, supportively placing his hand on George’s shoulder.

“Hell if I know.”

CLAY

Clay's right leg wouldn't stop bouncing, impatience and fear intertwining in his chest.

Neither George nor Gogy were responding to him. A small voice in his head was saying this was *his* fault; he was a dick to George, and maybe had incidentally been one to Gogy too. Maybe his standoffish ways had finally caught up to him.

Clay ran through the poem in his mind for probably the tenth time that day. He had memorized it, planning to say it to George verbally but eventually opting to write it instead out of predicted fear.

Turns out, that fear was more than justified.

George had left him on read.

He had read the message.

He was probably sitting on his bed, laughing at how foolishly vulnerable Clay had been.

Had Clay gone too far?

Maybe.

probably.

Of course George was joking about the date. Perhaps, he was stringing Clay along in order to make him feel the pain he put George through when he was fabricating disdain for the boy. Clay couldn't even be mad if he was.

Clay flinched at the sound of a Discord notification.

Maybe at least *Gogy* wasn't ignoring him.

Gogy: *hi dream- first of all, i'm so sorry you're going through this (and sorry for the late response, i was busy). i'm really happy for you about the date, but i hope the guy wasn't joking. to be honest, i'd like to think he wasn't. the poem you showed me was so genuine and palpable- maybe he just needs a moment to collect his thoughts ? either way, dream, i hope you're okay. if you need anything please let me know <3*

Clay laughed to himself.

He couldn't tell if his life was absolutely pathetic or impossibly amazing.

His closest friend at the moment, besides Sapnap, was a random man he met through an anonymous note only a few months ago. He wasn't even as comfortable with his old friends, namely Bad, Niki, Quackity, and Karl, as he was with Gogy.

Gogy just *got* him.

Dream: *ty for responding :(you are definitely more of an optimist than me... i just... i don't know. maybe him reciprocating feelings was just all in my head*

Gogy's name began typing, and then stopped. It began once more, only to stop again. After almost five rounds of this, a message went through.

Gogy: *trust me, dream. It'll all be ok*

Maybe Gogy was right.

Maybe he was overthinking things.

Then again,

maybe he wasn't.

GEORGE

George's fingers hovered over his message keyboard, trying to come up with something, *anything*, to text Clay to reassure him. Yet, he couldn't think of jackshit.

Texting Clay like everything was normal simply felt disingenuous. Truthfully, things *weren't* normal. Nothing was normal about their situation, for a matter of fact; it wasn't exactly *common* to meet someone, assume they hate you, get a letter from an anonymous person in your locker, rant to them about how you're practically fawning over the person, only find out they're interchangeable.

Thus, George decided he simply wouldn't respond.

George had asked Sapnap to check up on Clay to make sure he was okay; hurting Clay was about the *least* he wanted to do at the moment.

Clay wasn't in the wrong here. Neither of them were, in fact. They were just victims to chance, circumstance, and most prominently, obliviousness.

Something about the poem Clay had written was burned into George's brain. He couldn't deny, the words were beautiful. When he had initially read it, something about it felt familiar and personal to only him.

The fact that it was written for his eyes only was more than validating.

Clay had written a poem for him. *Was this considered a love poem?* It sure as hell sounded like one.

Just then, he was notified of another text message on his phone.

the clay guy: hey george. i saw you left my last message where i asked if you had opened the note on read... so i'll take that as a yes... i just wanna say sorry, i guess, if i went too far, or if it made you uncomfortable. not your fault; i think i read this situation wrong. really hoping we're still cool after this. sorry again

Fuck .

George felt like shit; on one hand, he didn't want to string Clay along, acting as if he had no knowledge of their anonymous friendship. On the other hand, however, George didn't want to leave Clay confused or worse, broken-hearted.

Thus, he hastily opened Discord and clicked on the message conversation between him and Dream.

Gogy: *hey dream? you know how a while ago you asked if i want to meet up, and i said i didn't know? i know now.*

After a few minutes, Dream began typing.

Dream: *oh shoot-- what'd you decide?*

Gogy: *let's do it.*

let's fucking meet up.

Chapter End Notes

AND SO IT BEGINS

george is Oblivious™ no more...

hope y'all enjoyed this chapter! :) drink water, get rest, and know you're valid <33

eighteen ○ commit

Chapter Notes

sorry for the long wait for the chapter.

i promise there won't be another week long drought of dnf content

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

CLAY

Gogy: *hey dream? you know how a while ago you asked if i want to meet up, and i said i didn't know? i know now.*

After a few minutes, Dream began typing.

Dream: *oh shoot-- what'd you decide?*

Gogy: *let's do it.*

let's fucking meet up.

The knot in Clay's stomach from his situation with George had only increased tenfold by the news of Gogy wanting to meet up. Of course, Clay himself had offered the opportunity for the boys to meet up whenever Gogy decided he wanted to.

What he didn't expect, however, was how *soon* Gogy would reach out to do so.

Clay shakily picked up his phone to reply to Gogy, heart beating so quickly and so loudly he could swear it was almost audible.

Dream: *holy shit*

when do you want to do it? :0

Gogy's response was practically instantaneous.

Gogy: *asap*

Clay's brow furrowed; for someone so reserved previously, Gogy being so impatient to meet him was slightly concerning. Nevertheless, Clay bit his tongue.

Dream: *ok it's saturday now... what about one day after school? or, friday, if school nights don't work for you*

Gogy began typing, the fading in and out three grey dots paralleling the rapid thump of Clay's heartbeat.

Gogy: *friday after school works. we can meet in the parking lot or something.*

so excited to meet you dream :)

With Gogy's returning cheerful disposition, Clay's heartbeat calmed. *Perhaps*, he thought to himself, *things were looking upward.*

Then, Clay heard a message ping.

New Message Notification:

george

GEORGE

George's thumbs practically ghosted over his keyboard, trying to find some sort of substantial response to say to Clay.

It wasn't that he was mad, or even disappointed, in the connection between the two - far from it, actually.

It was more the idea of instability that scared George. If Clay, the boy who had practically poured his heart out for George, found out that George and Gogy were the same person, there were practically an infinite amount of variables that could change. Maybe, Clay would be disappointed. Maybe, it would cause Clay to lose the feelings he once had. Or, finally, maybe Clay would lose all trust in George for good.

Thus, George began typing.

george: hi clay. i just want to let you know that, one, i'm not uncomfortable by your letter (at all), and two, i promise you didn't read anything wrong. it's just a lot... more than you know. i'm sorry if i caused you any worry... i've just been thinking a lot.

It only took a couple moments for Clay to begin typing.

the clay guy: you have nothing to be sorry for. what were you thinking about?

George took a moment to think, deciding to change Clay's contact name to something more fitting.

New Contact Name: clay <3

George shakily exhaled before he wrote out a response.

george: i've been thinking about everything, i guess

clay <3 : and what did you decide? about everything...

George's fingers moved almost faster than his brain.

george: i need more time

The grey dots signifying Clay was typing went on seemingly forever. With every new cycle of the dots came a worsening feeling of guilt in George's chest.

clay <3 : take all the time you need and more.

George closed his eyes, turned off his phone, and sighed with relief.

Maybe, just maybe, things could turn out positively.

SAPNAP

Sapnap sat on the foot of his bed, groaning to himself as he got a text from a familiar number: Clay. He sighed opening the message, preparing himself for whatever obviously stupid text was waiting for him.

Clay: i fucked up sap. i fucked up really bad

And, there it was. Sapnap hummed, trying to formulate a response that wouldn't give his complete understanding of the situation away.

Sapnap: Dude whatever happened, you know I've got ur back

Clay: thanks man... but it's about your roommate.

Sapnap had prepared to feign ignorance, so this next part was easy.

Sapnap: George?? What happened?

Sapnap, obviously, knew what had happened.

Clay: so fucking much, dude. first, we hang out at the zoo and he does all this cute ass flirty shit like touching my hand and letting me fidget with his fingers and GAHH . he was so fucking nice.

Sapnap grinned despite himself; he had never heard Clay be so outward with his romantic endeavors before, especially with his past girlfriends. Then, he practically just *complained* about them, rather than gushing about how “fucking nice” they were.

Sapnap: Sheeeeeesh dude, that sounds great. What’s the issue then?

Clay: hold on. it gets worse (or better, i guess, but like... idk, you’ll get it once i explain). when we were in the car, he put on a song he found me listening to a while ago at the skatepark (long story). then, he asked me why i was such a bitch to him when we first met. which, obviously, i couldn’t just TELL him, cuz then i’d basically be confessing the fact that i’m practically head over heels over the guy. i said i needed more time, and he said, VERBATIM, may i add, “you can take all the time you want”. he is so fucking sweet

Sapnap felt his heart inadvertently warm.

Sapnap: Awwwww

Clay: don’t aw.

Sapnap: Whateverrrr dude. Anyways, continue?

Clay: then, we pull up to your house. and, at basically the same time, we both ask if the zoo trip was a date or not.

Sapnap: Yooooo what did you say

Clay: i said “do you want it to be?”

Sapnap: Okay Clay! Smooth af.

Clay: see ... this is where it gets worse.

Sapnap was unaware of what exactly had led George to connect the dots between who Clay was and who Dream was, but it must’ve been somewhat substantial. This next part, Sapnap was being honest about his lack of knowledge.

Sapnap: Uh oh. What happened

Clay: don’t fucking laugh but...

Sapnap: Go on

Clay: i may have written a poem. i guess you could call it a love poem, but idk.

Sapnap bit back a snicker as he texted back a response.

Sapnap: Modern day Shakespeare over here???

Clay: shut the hell up. anyways, george practically ghosted me, and now he isn’t talking to me. he said he needs more time to think, and i’m really fucking scared. i didn’t think we needed “time to think” about this??? we both like each other - i thought, at least - and i’m so fucking confused

Oh.

Oh.

There were two potential reasons George would have recognized the connection between the two. It was either he, one, recognized the handwriting, or two, “Dream” showed “Gogy” his poem. Either way, he had figured it out, leaving only Clay in the dark.

Sapnap: Holy fuck dude. I'm so sorry.

Truthfully, he was.

Clay: me too.

Clay was still typing. Sapnap lost himself in his thoughts until his phone vibrated, signifying another message from the blond.

Clay: just... make sure george is ok. please check on him. i might feel like shit but judging by his messages he isn't feeling so great either.

Sapnap: Of course, dude. If you need anything, please lmk

Clay: thanks man <3

Sapnap: Anytime.

Sapnap sighed before clicking the off button on his phone and practically collapsing onto his back on his mattress.

Jesus Christ , he thought to himself, who knew being so oblivious made third wheeling so annoying?

“I’m going out!” Sapnap called, reaching for the door handle.

“Don’t die!” George’s voice responded, muffled from the distance in the house between the two, as Sapnap swung open the door.

Sapnap opened his phone, clicking into his messages with Karl.

Sapnap: Heyyyyyy

Immediately, Karl began typing.

Karl: hiiii :] what do ya need

Sapnap: Do I need a reason to text my boyfriend ???

Karl: usually.

Sapnap: Oh shut up. Do you wanna meet at the school parking lot? we can skate ;)

Karl: is this you asking for me to come to the school just so i can do tricks and you can sit on your ass and watch?

Sapnap: Very much so yes.

Karl: ugh fine. be there in a few

Sapnap started on his way to the parking lot, only fumbling off of his board *a couple* of times. When he finally arrived, Karl was already there waiting for him.

When the man noticed his presence, he immediately sat up, face grinning. Sapnap walked up to him, planting a chaste kiss onto his cheek, and began ranting.

He spoke of everything: the “Dream” and “Gogy” situation, the relationship between Clay and

George, and the zoo date Clay had described to him. He explained how he had known everything from the beginning, and talked about the obliviousness of the boys.

When he was done, Karl offered him a small smile. “It’s really cute how much you care about your friends.”

Sapnap rolled his eyes, but felt a blush encroaching on his neck nonetheless. “They’re your friends, too.”

Karl scoffed lightheartedly. “Well, I wouldn’t say *that*. I’m obviously friends with Clay, but frankly I barely know George. Pretty much all I’ve seen of the guy was him practically making out with Clay at my party. You just care so deeply about people, Sap, even if you just met them months ago. It’s so...”

“Sexy?” Sapnap finished, a smug grin sitting atop his ruddy face.

“No, you nimrod,” Karl said between giggles, lightly nudging him with his shoulder. “I was going to say endearing.”

Sapnap cockily raised an eyebrow. “So I’m *endearing* now, am I?”

“Oh shut up,” Karl protested, a blush visible on his face as well. “So, what do we do about these nimrods?”

Sapnap shrugged. “If I knew, I would’ve done it months ago.”

GEORGE

Sometime after George stressing over hurting Clay, or perhaps him introducing the idea of meeting “Dream,” George had fallen asleep.

When he woke, he checked his phone. 2:46 AM, it read.

George's initial instinct was to go to the skatepark.

No, he thought to himself, *Clay would definitely be there.*

Still, something was pulling him there, as if visiting the place he had first seen the kind and considerate Clay he had grown to adore would help clear his mind. Thus, George snuck out the front door, Sapnap's board in hand, and began towards the park.

--

When he arrived, he was more than pleased to see Clay wasn't there. There was a small twinge of disappointment, of course - George had fallen, and fallen *hard* for this boy - but the unwillingness George had to speak to Clay in fear of either withholding the truth or spilling out the information George knew outweighed his infatuation.

George gently placed the board down, mind transporting to the day Clay had offered to teach him how to skate.

George gingerly hopped on, trying to remember the instructions the boy had given him.

"You don't get to be afraid. Commit to whatever you're doing. If you fall, that's okay, I'll catch you."

Only, now, Clay wasn't there to catch him.

George put one foot on, the board still feeling unfamiliar and foreign to him. Nevertheless, he *had* to follow Clay's words. He had to commit.

He placed on a second foot before reaching one down to start moving. Much to his surprise, he did it with little to no instability, his feet still balanced and planted onto the board.

George could admit, this was rather fun.

He ended up skating laps around the park, sometimes feeling bold enough to go up and down ramps. He even, once, managed to drop into the main ramp of the park.

George checked his phone, 4:12 , but paid it no mind. He was having too much fun to go home right now.

CLAY

It was 4 AM, and like always, Clay was itching with a burning desire to go skating. This feeling, however, had increased tenfold with his recent situation. Now, he wanted to go solely for the purpose of clearing his clouded thoughts.

As he strolled up to the park, however, an unusual sight stood before him.

There, in the distance, was George skating around on his own.

Doing so, Clay might add, brilliantly.

His movements were clumsy, but still somehow looked calculated. Something in his nature, perhaps faux confidence, reminded Clay loosely of how he acted when he first tried out skateboarding.

As Clay approached, he made a mental note to be quiet. Watching George, despite the boy being the reason behind his inner turmoil, made every stressed thought a fleeting memory.

Seeing the boy giggle with giddiness when he rode around, or noticing his frustrated huffs when he fell off of his board, felt so incredibly raw and so sickeningly George.

George turned around, gaze nearly, but still not not, hitting Clay. Clay sighed with relief as he turned away from the skate park.

As much as he enjoyed watching George, he didn't want to do anything that could be considered uncomfortable or a breach of privacy for George.

Nevertheless, as he began walking away, one frustrated grunt caught his attention and forced him to pause in his tracks.

"I've got to commit to this," George mumbled to himself.

"I need to commit for Clay."

Chapter End Notes

hope u enjoyed. sorry it was sort of anti climactic and more of a transition chapter.
next chapter should be out fairly soon (and thankfully be more eventful)

love u all!

nineteen ○ lead on

Chapter Notes

hiclaire ?? posting a new update in one day ?? it can't be ! *dies*

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

CLAY

School, in a word, was hell.

Walking into his first-period class, Clay had quite literally no idea what to expect. Turns out, he should've been expecting the worst.

Upon arrival, he couldn't help but notice the desk he and George usually sat at was suspiciously empty. When he sat down, as usual, he visually scanned the room, catching something in his peripheral vision: *George*. George was sitting, instead of with Clay, next to a random student in the class. Clay vaguely recognized him - his name was either Callan or Callahan, he wasn't quite sure - but it was rather odd that George had chosen to sit next to him of all people.

Clay, desperate to get his mind off of the situation between the two boys, let his thoughts drift elsewhere. Instead of fooling around coding plugins with George, as he usually would during his compsci class, he instead listened intently to Philza's, his professor's, lecture.

Eventually, Philza's voice droned on and on, leaving Clay's brain to focus on George once again. Clay didn't miss the subtle glances George was giving him, although he refused to meet his gaze. Making eye contact with George after he had laid his feelings out so brazenly was not exactly the cloying endeavor he wanted during his coding class.

Saccharine thoughts of the brunet penetrated his mind and refused to leave: how his hand felt on Clay's, how his soft laughter never failed to brighten up a room, how the lines on either side of his lips slightly crinkled over when he grinned. George was fluster and he was impudence. He was solest and he was togetherness. He was... *gone* ?

Clay looked at where George was sitting and noticed that his chair was empty. Clay brushed it off,

but when he turned his gaze back to Philza, the teacher was staring at him with a soft and contemplative look.

“Ok, class, you can now take the final fifteen minutes or so of this period to practice coding Prolog. God knows you’re going to need it,” Philza announced to the room with a clap, the sound of shuffling of opening computers following shortly after.

Clay reached into his backpack to do the same, but was stopped with a light pat onto his back by none other than Philza himself.

“Sorry?” Clay questioned, slightly confused as to why Philza was focused on him at that moment - he had already sufficiently mastered coding in Prolog.

“Are you alright, mate?” Philza said, barely having to lean down to meet the height Clay was sitting at due to Clay’s substantial height.

Clay nodded.

“Is *George* ? He was practically staring at you all class, and I couldn’t help but notice you two boys weren’t sitting together,” Philza questioned further.

Clay felt his shoulders inadvertently tense. “I don’t know. Long story.”

Philza chuckled lightly to himself. “Listen, mate, if you ever need a professor’s point of view, I’ve got time.”

“Thanks, Sir.”

“Oh, come on,” Philza said, laughing quietly and once again slapping him protectively on the back. “I’ve taught you long enough where you shouldn’t call me sir.”

Clay grinned weakly, thoughts of George still flooding his mind.

“Listen, Clay, I can tell whatever is going on is bothering you,” Philza continued. “I have never seen you look at another student like you do at George, much less when you’re in your element like you are in this class. I’m not an idiot, Clay, I know that earlier in the year, you were skipping classes. As soon as you got on with George, though, you were here every class practically five minutes early. You even managed to secure top three in the coding competition you two did together. Whatever is going on between you two, I hope it works out.”

Damn, Clay thought to himself, *Am I that obvious?*

“Thanks, Philza, I appreciate it.”

“Of course, mate. I will say, when George asked to be excused to the bathroom, he looked rather poignant. I’d suggest talking to him if I were you.”

Clay shook his head subtly. “He doesn’t want to talk to me.”

Phil placed a hand on his shoulder. “Clay, I hope I am not overstepping, but it definitely seems like he does.”

Clay stood up from his chair, now significantly higher than Philza.

“Are you sure?” Clay asked. His professor nodded. “Alright, then. I guess I’ll go talk to him. Thank you so much,” he finished, walking towards the exit.

“No problem,” Phil called out. “Just remember, you still need to practice using Prolog!”

Clay apprehensively pushed the bathroom door open, light sniffing audible immediately as the door stood ajar.

Clay took in the scene before him: George was standing in front of one of the sinks, face impossibly red and eyes glimmering with what looked like either the residue of or the early stages of tears. His hair was mussed as if he had been running his hands through it continuously.

Now, upon Clay's entrance, the brunet sharply turned towards him.

"Clay?" the boy asked tentatively, voice raspier than usual.

Clay nodded. "Georgie, are you okay?"

Clay physically cringed as George practically winced at the nickname. "Please, Clay, don't call me that."

"Why-"

"Please."

Clay nodded, stepping further into the bathroom and closing the door behind him. George had now returned facing the sink, hands on either side of the basin as he stared at himself in the mirror.

"George, we can just pretend the letter never happened," Clay spoke up, not even bothering to acknowledge how much it hurt himself to say such a thing. *George was more important than his selfish want to be with him* . "We can just say it was a fluke-"

"No, Clay," George interrupted.

Clay watched with guilt as the boy he was so profoundly infatuated with held back tears at the sink.

The boys stood in silence for a moment, the only sound between the two the sickeningly shallow breaths coming from George.

Eventually, Clay spoke up.

"I'm so sorry, George- for everything. I'm sorry for putting you in this position and for making you uncomfortable. We can just move past this, yeah?" he offered, trying and failing to ignore the

pitiful feeling developing in his chest.

At this, George turned towards him once more, face softening. For a moment, George looked just as he had before this entire situation had taken a turn for the worst. Clay hummed contemplatively to himself at the word that infiltrated his thoughts: *beautiful* .

“Clay,” George said, voice quieter than previously, “you have done absolutely nothing wrong. I promise, I’m not crying because your letter upset me. I’m crying because of myself.”

Clay raised an eyebrow, but his shoulders lost some of their original tension all the same. “What do you mean?”

George shook his head to himself. “I don’t know. I just feel so fucking guilty.”

“Why?” Clay pushed further, now the remorse in his chest being replaced with concern.

George sighed to himself, clearing his throat before he began. “I don’t want to lead you on.”

Clay’s stomach practically dropped.

George didn’t mean any of the bullshit he had fed Clay .

He didn’t like him, he didn’t want their zoo excursion to be a “date,” he had just been leading Clay on.

Of course.

Of-fucking-course.

Clay felt the corners of his eyes sting. Unable to fight the urge to begin tearing up, he headed for the exit of the bathroom.

“No, Clay, wait! That’s not what I meant-” George began calling after him, but Clay knew better than to put any weight into his words. He was clearly just “leading him on.”

“Fuck you,” Clay muttered, before exiting the bathroom and slamming the door, rendering himself alone and in tears in the empty hallway.

Clay, refusing to go to his next class, decided on wandering through the hallway. Eventually, he strode upon his locker, opening it to reveal an unread letter from Gogy. Admittedly, it had been a while since Clay and Gogy had talked over letter form.

Clay internally punched himself, so busy ranting about George that he had ignored Gogy who was of almost equal importance to him.

Clay let his eyes scan over the paper, the only thing he could feel remorse and naivety.

Dream.

Oh. My. God. Your poem is amazing!!

You are so fucking talented, holy shit. Not to sound all sappy (because i hate you >:(/j) but your words genuinely moved me. If you don’t publish this and make millions off of it I am suing.

I’m sure the guy you like will love it :) If he doesn’t (WHICH HE WILL!!!) he isn’t worth shit. You have me tho <3

Now... about the person in my life... oh boy, where to start.

He is so kind. Well, he is now, I should say. At first, we didn’t necessarily see eye to eye lol. He is super fucking pretty as well. His hair is golden - like genuinely aurelian. He is literally a Greek

God. Plus, he is funny, too. I'd never tell him, though (just like you, he's got a hugeeee ego). I know I sound like a simp (I am tbh), but I like him.

Reallllllly like him.

Sorry for that mini rant, I am just down horrendously bad haha.

I'm sure the guy who likes you feels the same.

For your question, Dream, can I have a song recommendation? I'm bored and you haven't sent one in a while >:(/lh.

you are awesome, I'm sure the boy will love it <3

- gogs!

Clay shook his head, internally cursing the insulting nature of the universe. Gogy clearly had written this letter before Clay had ranted to him about the misfortune of what had happened, and reliving his giddiness and blind infatuation only made his pain feel all the more real.

Clay couldn't even find the power to write back.

GEORGE

George had gone to the nurse's office, making up some fabricated lie about how he felt unwell in order to be excused early. The nurse bought it easily, leaving George to start on his walk towards his place of residence.

He couldn't take being at that school.

Everything just screamed *Clay* .

The names of students on the football team reminded George of the class period Clay had ranted about the one sport he “could actually stand.” The soft music playing through the halls transported George back to the day where Clay had explained to him for a solid fifteen minutes why Radiohead was “criminally underrated.” Untold memories. Unnoticed looks. All of this was trapped inside that school.

The cool and brisk air hitting his face as he walked was a refreshingly welcome distraction from the boiling numbness of his thoughts.

His distraction was short-lived when he heard a ping from his phone.

Dream .

Shit - it was Clay.

George hurriedly opened the application, acute liability muddying his heartbeat.

dream: *hi gogy. i'm so sorry, i feel like i've been ignoring you in order to deal with that stupid guy. i've been a shitty friend, and i'm sorry, i just feel like absolute shit. i read your letter today. it was really fucking nice, and yet i couldn't even get myself to respond. can you believe that? i'm a mess*

No, Clay, George thought to himself, I'm the only mess here.

gogy: *don't apologize, dream <3 i promise, it's okay. we're friends, after all, and part of being friends is listening to each other's problems and helping them work through it. being here for you is the least i can do. did something happen?*

dream: *he doesn't like me. i don't think he ever even liked me. he said he was just leading me on*

George's heart palpitated. Clay had absorbed his words in practically the worst way possible, taking it as if George was leading him on about liking him. Obviously, this was not how George had intended it. To George, leading him on meant continuing to talk to him all the while hiding the

fact he knew Clay was Dream. To Clay, it clearly meant so much more.

gogy: *what the fuck? i'm so sorry about that dream :(i'm here for you. he sounds like a piece of shit*

dream: *that's the thing, though, he's not. he's the nicest person i've ever fucking met, and this is so unlike him. i can't even be mad at him, though, because i was such a dick to him when we first met that i deserve to be treated the same way back*

The remorse in George's gut increased tenfold. Of course, even after Clay had thought George was stringing him along, he continued to *compliment* him. Clay deserved only the best. Clay deserved kindness, compassion, love, and everything between the three. Clay deserved goodness.

gogy: *shut up. you don't deserve to be treated like shit, dream. i care about you, and it sucks seeing you like this. your past mistakes don't define your worth*

dream: *you are too nice gogy. ty for everything. genuinely, idk where i'd be without you*

You have no idea , George remarked.

gogy: *will you just do me one favor?*

dream: *sure...*

gogy: *from the way you've spoken about this guy before today, it sounded like he really cares about you. maybe wait a week and see what changes? you never know what could happen.*

dream: *i guess. just for you*

gogy: *take care, dream <3*

Fuck.

Now, George had to figure out what the hell he was going to do.

Considering he was set to meet Dream - *Clay* - in four days, it didn't look like he had much time to do so.

Chapter End Notes

hope y'all enjoyed muahahahah

just some fluff (/j LMAO)

twenty o dream?

Chapter Notes

oh boy. here we go.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

CLAY

Maybe it was a fever.

Maybe it was a cold.

Maybe, no, definitely, it was an *ache* .

It was now Tuesday, and Clay couldn't find the motivation to get out of bed. He fabricated some bullshit lie to his parents about feeling sick, and they begrudgingly agreed to let him skip school. *Even if they hadn't agreed* , Clay acknowledged to himself, *he would've skipped anyways* .

George hadn't even bothered to text him after their "fight," the day previous, if you could even call it that. Clay admitted that he wouldn't even necessarily be happy at the idea of George texting him, and more so the fact that George texting him would signify George felt an *ounce* of guilt.

Instead, Clay opened Discord, the familiar grey "G" symbol profile picture welcoming him warmly as he opened their private message conversation.

dream: *morning gogs*

It only took a few moments for his mystery companion - one that he would be meeting in three days, he might add - to respond.

gogy: *hi dream :P are u feeling better today :)*

dream: *uhhh not really*

skipping school, i feel like shit

gogy: *aw shit i'm sorry :[i wouldn't skip if i was you though.. don't want to deal with too many absences at the end of senior year*

Clay giggled to himself at his friend's adamant concern for his well-being. It almost reminded him of... well... of *George* .

dream: *dw ;) i bs-ed my parents into calling the school and sayin im sick*

gogy: *you sly, sly man*

dream: *thats me ;)*

gogy: *i have to go to class now, *cries*, but i'll talk to you later, dream. let me know if you need anything, really :)*

dream: *ily gogy, you're such a good friend :D*

Clay gulped to himself anxiously, not realizing he had told his friend he loved him. It wasn't that it was all that bold for him - Clay regularly told his friends he loved them - but it was different with someone he had never actually *met* before. Thankfully, Gogy began typing.

gogy: *ily 2 dream.. more than you know*

dream: *<3*

For the first time, Clay felt closer to someone he had never met than anyone else.

And, truly, he relished in it.

GEORGE

“I just don’t *get it*, George, why don’t you just tell him you know?” Sapnap exclaimed, clearly not impressed by George’s story of the mishap between the two in the bathroom.

George sighed with disengagement. “It’s not that simple.”

“Why not?”

Shaking his head, George continued. “I genuinely like Clay, Sapnap, and we’ve built such a strong bond on both fronts that I feel like us meeting up needs to be special.”

Sapnap nodded, fork twiddling in his hand as he switched between consoling George and devouring his lunch food.

After a few moments of comfortable silence, a familiar student sat across from their table.

“Hey, Niki,” Sapnap welcomed, not bothering to look up from where his fork was rummaging through his macaroni and cheese.

“Hello!” she responded cheerfully, offering George a small smile.

When George forced a grin back, the blonde’s brow furrowed. “Are you okay, George? Is this about Clay?”

At this, George gasped while simultaneously facepalming at Sapnap stifling a giggle. “Why would it be about Clay?”

Niki laughed as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. “George, with all due respect, you two aren’t exactly the most *subtle* .”

“She’s right, you know,” Sapnap interjected, words slightly muddled with the remnants of food in his mouth. *Gross*.

“What do you mean?” George asked, treading lightly.

“Well, that day during lunch when his hand was on your thigh, for starters. Your face was like, unbearably red,” Niki explained between non-judgemental sounding giggles.

George felt his face warm at the thought. “You saw that?”

“We all did,” Sapnap chided, once again. “Bad texted me afterward saying how, and I quote, ‘cute of a couple’ you two were. When I explained you weren’t actually dating, he thought I was baiting him.”

George sighed. “Fucking hell.”

“It’s nothing to be ashamed of, George,” Niki once again consoled. “It’s just unbearable to see how fucking *oblivious* you two are.”

“Just be like me and Karl,” Sapnap began. “I said, ‘hey, I like you,’ and he said ‘wow, I do too’. Easy, done and done.”

George rolled his eyes. “But that’s *different* .”

“How so?” Niki interjected.

Unable to explain the situation vaguely, George opted to outline the details of his situation with Clay and Dream, from their initial locker letters to their recent fight.

“Oh,” she exclaimed, clearly flabbergasted.

“Oh indeed.”

“Well, you’re meeting on Saturday, you said, right?” she began, eyes lighting up with something that looked like inspiration.

“Friday,” George corrected, “but continue.”

“What if I had an idea that would be a fun way for you two to meet that *also* doubles as an apology?”

George considered the thought. “What are you implying?”

“What if,” Niki began, “you wrote your own poem. Or, *poems* plural.”

George immediately shook his head. “Hell no. A poem is how we got into this mess to begin with.”

“C’mon, George!” Sapnap spoke up. “Don’t you trust Niki? After all, this is kinda her thing.”

“What’s her thing?” George questioned, not *completely* up to speed with the dynamic of the group even after months of companionship.

“Love advice,” he explained. “Niki’s how like, five of us landed our first girlfriends.”

George raised an eyebrow. “Actually?”

Niki nodded lightly, grinning. “What can I say, I know how to get people simping.”

George laughed, the Texan and the blonde quickly following suit.

“Ok,” George said, laughter subsiding.

“Ok, what?” Niki clarified.

“Ok, I’ll do your plan. I trust you, Niki.”

The blonde flashed him a warm smile. “You won’t regret it.”

CLAY

Clay had forced himself to nap, exhaustion piling up after his many nights opting to skateboard rather than sleep. When he finally woke up, he checked his phone, signifying it was already mid-afternoon.

Despite his internal contempt at his wasted day, his heart warmed at the thought that this would mean Gogy would be able to talk, considering school hours were over.

Unsurprisingly, he already had an unopened Discord notification from Gogy. It jubilated Clay that the two talking was so commonplace, as if it was the most mundane thing in the world to have a secret companion you had met through the exchange of locker letters.

***gogy:** dreammm*

dweam

dreaaAAAAM

dream respond >:(

Clay chuckled to himself, beginning to type.

***dream:** damn so clingy smh*

i have responded

gogy: *sorry, next time i'll just stalk your locker instead _('ヅ) _/*

dream: *touché,, now what's up*

gogy: *ok so you know how we were set to meet on friday*

Shit , Clay apprehensively thought to himself, is Gogy getting second thoughts?

dream: *you're not bailing on me right :P*

gogy: *nononono that's not it*

dream: *sorry,, just kinda anxious about the whole ordeal lol*

gogy: *dw dream, i get that :] all i was gonna ask is if we could meet at the school entrance, rather than the parking lot. I wanna plan something.... muahahahaha >:)*

dream: *don't kidnap me plz*

gogy: *you WISH i kidnapped you*

dream: *maybe i do ;)*

gogy: *you're so annoying. ttyl dream :)*

dream: *cya later gogy*

Clay sighed contentedly, worries from George subsiding thanks to Gogy.

Then, he got a phone notification.

A very, very *long* notification.

Clay cocked a brow as he pressed on the message. *It was from George .*

Clay clicked on the text and began reading.

george: hey clay. i'm sure you're not exactly pleased to get a text from me - i wouldn't be either - but i felt like i needed to say this. no, this isn't me trying to let you down gently, or something, nor is it me mad at you. it's an apology. clay, i'm sorry.

An apology, Clay thought semi-proudly to himself, before he continued reading.

i'm not sorry for becoming friends with you, or holding your hand, or even saying that i wanted the zoo thing to be a date, though. i don't regret any of that, because it was how i felt. i hope you don't regret it either. i wouldn't blame you if you did, though.

He didn't , Clay acknowledged. He didn't regret it.

now, to explain my stupid, stupid actions in the bathroom. i promise, i can explain. i've been dealing with... something; i can't exactly explain it - not right now - but i promise i will soon if given the chance. it's a long story, but eventually, there will be time to tell you. when i said "lead you on" i did NOT mean romantically. in fact, for probably weeks, i thought YOU were leading me on. you were too perfect, too clean for me.

No one is too perfect for you, George, Clay thought to himself absentmindedly. Still, he shook his head, ridding his head of those thoughts. Clay had yet to be convinced of George's apology.

i'm sorry. i'm sorry. i'm sorry. i wish i could say it more, but quite honestly, my hand hurts from typing. you told me that you would tell me why you used to hate me, and then one day decided not to, one day. i told you "you can take all the time you want."

Clay didn't need the reminder. The memory was burned into his brain. The ghost of tears was tangible on the inner corners of his eyes.

that still rings true. hopefully you can grant me the same liberty of time. i care so, so much about you, clay. take care <3 see you soon.

Clay didn't know what to do. He didn't know what to *say*. He couldn't forgive George, not like this. His story didn't line up; if he wasn't leading him on, why was he practically avoiding him the day previous? It didn't make sense.

At a loss for words, Clay opted to simply double-tap the message, a blue thumbs up appearing on the right-hand corner of George's seemingly fabricated words.

Breathlessly, the blond put his phone down and went back to sleep.

GEORGE

"Sapnap, he liked the fucking message," George said, heart beating faster than his brain could keep up.

"He liked it? That's good, right?"

"No," George said, shaking his hand. "He physically *liked* it, as in 'added a thumbs up' as a

reaction.”

Sapnap’s brow furrowed. “Did he not say anything else?” George shook his head. “Yikes, dude. That’s an L.”

“No *shit* Sapnap, it’s an ‘L’,” George retorted, using air quotes on the criminally informal choice of words his friend used for such a sensitive topic.

“I mean, at least he didn’t *dislike* it,” Sapnap offered with a shrug, and as much as George wanted to disagree, Sapnap was right. A slight improvement, but an improvement nonetheless.

“So,” George continued, changing the subject. “What do you think of Niki’s idea?”

Sapnap piped up at this. “I think it’s good. Clay has always been super adamant about being the center of attention-” *George was well aware*. “-so he’ll probably dig it.”

“I only worry if it’s too *cliché*,” George confided, leading to a comforting chuckle from his American friend.

“George, you two met from anonymous locker letters. Your entire relationship’s existence is cliché.”

George laughed softly at this, but even he could hear how forced it sounded.

“You okay?” Sapnap asked, genuine concern in his tone.

George nodded. “What if- what if he’s disappointed that I’m Gogy?”

Sapnap shook his head, snickering to himself. “George, you haven’t seen the way he practically lights up when he’s talking about you. Trust me, disappointed is the absolute *last* thing that he would be.”

George smiled, running a hand through his own hair that had once been cropped cleanly and now

had developed an overgrown wave.

“Thanks for dealing with all of this, Sapnap. I’m sure it isn’t exactly fun third-wheeling while your oblivious exchange student housemate pines over your best friend,” George flattered, a grateful smile on his lips.

“Don’t mention it, dude. Meanwhile, I have my own blond boyfriend to attend to, so I shall be off now,” he excused himself, bowing with feigned formality.

After Sapnap’s exit, George moved from the boy’s living room into his own bedroom.

George was internally grateful that Sapnap’s parents weren’t at their home much, working late and leaving early.

George used the empty house as a vessel; he cried, he read, he wrote.

Three days until he met Dream.

Three days until Clay knew the truth.

CLAY

The next few days of school were just like the Monday previous.

George would barely talk to him, and he continued sitting with the other boy in their class. His name was Callahan, Clay discovered.

Finally, however, it was Friday, and the day passed mind-numbingly slowly. Every second spent reminded him that he was one moment closer to meeting Gogy.

Realistically, if he was in a better situation, Clay could've asked George for advice on how to calm his nerves. Now, he was forced to ask the very person who was the source of this anxiety.

dream: gogy?

gogy: woah that's my name

dream: you're such an idiot

gogy: no u,, anyways what's up

dream: can i be honest..

gogy: no. (yes :)]

dream: i'm kinda nervous to meet you lol...

Clay swallowed the lump in his throat as he put his phone away, putting his items in his backpack in preparation to walk to lunch.

When he was done, he checked his phone and noticed Gogy had replied. He began walking to the cafeteria and started to read.

gogy: s'okay. i am too :]

dream: why ... do i intimidate u >:)

gogy: literally fuck off i h8 u

dream: ly2<3 gotta go to lunch. talk to you later gogs

gogy: irl :0

dream: irl :D

Clay approached the lunchroom, sitting at his usual seat. He noticed George smiling to himself on his phone on the other side of the table.

“George,” he acknowledged with a nod of his head.

“You read my message, yeah?” the boy clarified, noting his presence.

“Yeah,” Clay responded, noticing how his voice intrinsically became softer in George’s presence.

“Are we okay?” George asked, voice quiet from both distance and what Clay perceived as nerves.

“Don’t know.”

“Me neither.”

At this, Niki walked up and sat at their table, Bad and Sapnap following shortly after.

The moment was gone, and Clay wasn’t exactly mad about it.

Just hours to go.

Only a few hours to go.

Then, maybe, Gogy could help him out.

3:14.

3:14.

One minute until school would end.

3:14.

3:14.

3:14.

3:15.

The bell rang .

The bell rang. It was time to meet Gogy.

It was time to meet Gogy.

Clay's limbs felt heavy as he walked towards the entrance of the school. Almost instinctively, he opened Discord to text Gogy.

dream: *so excited to see you aHHH*

gogy: *dream. i will literally see you in like 2 minutes. you can wait to text me until then smh /lh*

dream: yeah yeah

Clay exited the building, scanning the perimeter for a person who looked like they were searching for someone. Alas, he found no one. The only person he found he could recognize was... Niki?

“Clay, hello!” the blonde greeted, some sort of parchment in her hand.

“Hey, Niki, sorry for the short hello, but I’m sorta looking for someone-”

“I know!” she interrupted, handing Clay the letter. “I was told by ‘Gogy’” she said in air quotes “to give this to you. Good luck!”

And just like that, the girl was gone, leaving Clay with the unopened piece of paper.

He apprehensively began reading:

—

Hello Dream, I’m sure you’re wondering where I am >:) I may or may not have orchestrated a sort of... scavenger hunt(?) for you to meet me, letters and all, to remind us of our roots hehe. Thought I’d pull a Dream and write some poetry while I’m at it (don’t judge me, I fuckin suck). Okay... let’s begin.

Dream, we have yet to meet in real life,

an endeavor inciting so much strife.

For your next clue, go to a classroom where students hath flowed,

go to the room where nerds (LOL) go to code

—

Clay laughed to himself, heading towards his compsci classroom. Admittedly, it was rather strange that Gogy knew where Philza’s class was, but Clay paid it no mind. Gogy *did* say he coded offhandedly before, so it made sense that they would both have him as a teacher.

When Clay arrived, Philza was waiting there with a smug grin.

“Phil?” Clay asked as the ginger was chuckling to himself.

“Here ya’ go, mate,” he responded, handing Clay an identical piece of parchment.

Clay offered Clay a grin before returning to the hallway and reading.

Congrats, Dream, you’re not a total idiot and found the first clue! Now, onto the second!

You found the compsci room,

for that I give you props.

Now, go to the closest place nearby where

you can get water for mops. (i know this rhyme fucking sucks, but nothing rhymes with props and i’m too lazy to rewrite this).

Clay giggled, thinking for a moment of what the destination Gogy was describing could be.

Clay decided “water for mops” was most likely alluding to the restroom, so he headed towards the nearest bathroom. Absentmindedly, he recalled that that bathroom specifically was the one he and George had their slight quarrel in. He brushed the thought away, opening the door to the washroom.

Unlike before, there was no one waiting for him. Instead, an envelope sat on the top of the sink that read “DREAM!! OPEN THIS!”

Clay took the hint and opened the letter.

You reached number 3! Wowwww... okay onto the poem (if you can even call it that).

We've known each other longer than you'd think,

every stupid letter. Every smug wink.

I'm so excited, for you to greet,

now go to the place where we go to eat.

Clay paid no mind to the first two lines, reasoning that it was just for rhyming purposes.

Thus, he continued to his next supposed destination: the cafeteria.

When he entered the room, uncharacteristically empty due to it being after school hours.

Sitting atop his usual lunch seat - admittedly, it was slightly disconcerting that Gogy knew where he sat at lunch, but it easily could've been a coincidence - was an identical envelope with the same uppercase text screaming at Clay to read it. Thus, he did.

This is the penultimate clue. Congrats! (and before you ask... it's definitely not because I was too lazy to think of more locations. Absolutely not)

We haven't talked here yet,

at least not ourselves.

Go to the place where "skater-boys"

doth delve. (does this sentence make sense? No. does it rhyme with "ourselves"? absolutely.)

He knew exactly where he was headed, and exited the school with haste. Clay once again laughed to himself as he opened Discord.

dream: i can't believe you're making me TRAVEL to meet you. better be worth it

gogy: shut up nerd

dream: i'll shut up when you have to travel like twenty minutes to meet me >:(

gogy: BE QUIET AND HURRY UP >:(((

dream: okayy okayy... omw >:)

Clay headed on his way to the skate park, thankful he had ridden his board to school that day.

When he finally approached the supposed final location, it was suspiciously empty. The air was busy, but comfortingly so. Clay was used to the perplexing quiet of the 4am breeze, and the 4pm version was not unwelcome.

Usually, there would be people there at this time.

In passing, Clay wondered if Gogy had planned in advance to make sure there wasn't.

Clay walked into the park, searching for a letter left by Gogy.

His vision finally landed on a messily folded piece of paper on one of the slabs of concrete. Clay hastily maneuvered towards it, dropping his board clumsily on the ground and not bothering to carry it with him.

Clay began unfolding it, eyes finally focusing on the paper.

“ *UNMASKED, for Georgie* ,” it began.

“ *You make me very happy, george. i really fucking hope you feel the same way,*” it ended.

Clay felt his stomach inadvertently drop.

“Where-” he began, speaking to nowhere and no one in particular, “Where the fuck did you find... *get this?*”

No answer.

“Gogy? What the fuck?” he exclaimed, eyes still glued to the paper, unsure what exactly the situation was before him.

There were a few moments of bitter and cold, 4am-adjacent silence.

Then, a confusingly new yet domestically familiar voice rang through his ears.

“Dream?”

Chapter End Notes

cliffhanger cuz i love yall >:)

before y'all comment on it... i know its cliché and i RELISH in it

hope u enjoyed! this chapter was a bitch to write lol, it took forever. any comments,

kudos, bookmarks, etc. are always appreciated <3 ly the most!

twenty-one ○ who he is

Chapter Notes

FUUUUCK HERE WE GO

also, i will say, while writing practically this entire chapter i had "rain" by cavetown on loop, so i do suggest listening to that as background noise heh :)
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGYgCt3rkqM>)

(if you saw me post this chapter before fixing the title, haha no you didnt)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

CLAY

“Dream?”

The voice was meek as if it belonged to the moon too afraid to reveal itself from behind the clouds.

Clay, of course, recognized that voice.

It belonged to the boy he had *loved* .

It belonged to-

“George?” he exclaimed, bitterly bewildered by the situation at hand. Had Gogy and George orchestrated this to mock him? Were they friends? Was this some sort of sick joke?

Clay noticed a droplet of rain fall onto his forehead. *As if this day couldn't get any better.*

Clay turned to find George standing, hands in the pockets of a brown tweed jacket that looked much too warm for the clammy Florida weather.

“Hi,” the Brit responded, an apprehensive-looking smile on his face.

Clay stood from where he was situated reading the note and headed towards George who was standing closer towards the entrance of the skatepark.

“What the fuck is going on?” Clay spit, his voice laced with a melancholy mixture of poignancy, venom, and bleakness.

Clay had been befriending Gogy for months now, and to think it was some sort of harrowing *prank* on him, orchestrated by *George*, nonetheless? The pain in his heart increased tenfold at the thought.

The singular raindrops were slowly growing to a comfortable drizzle, the pitter-patter of water droplets paralleling the steadfast beating of Clay’s mangled heart.

“What do you mean?” George asked, his smile dropping instantly and eyes growing with what looked like fear.

“Oh, please,” Clay scoffed bitterly, “You know *exactly* what I mean. You- you illustrated some sort of evil *plot* to get back at me, working with whoever ‘Gogy’ is to portray yourself as a friend!”

George immediately took a step back, brow furrowing. “Clay, you don’t understand-”

“Oh, yeah, George? Then please,” Clay started, a feverishly pained smile on his face, “Please, for the love of God, make me ‘understand’!”

“Clay,” George started, voice dropping and softening at the word. “Can you please just listen to me, and sit down?” His tone sounded genuine, even Clay could give him that.

“Fine,” Clay spat, sitting on a concrete bench off to the side. George soon followed after him, leaving a considerable amount of space between the two.

It felt like a broken promise.

The rain was deafening.

“Clay, I’m going to start from the very beginning,” George started, volume quiet, “so please, just bear with me. Can you do that?” It wasn’t condescending; it was a genuine question. Clay nodded.

George smiled softly and began. “So, I guess it all started when you first showed up at that school behind me. You said, verbatim, ‘who the hell is this?’, and although my first instinct was to be like: ‘damn, what a jerk,’ you were pretty, so I let it slide.”

Clay allowed himself to giggle lightly at that, despite his best efforts not to.

“Then, no matter what I could do, it seemed like you absolutely *hated* me, so I just settled for us not being friends. You’ll never guess my surprise when I got a letter in *my* locker from a random senior.”

Clay’s eyes widened. “So, you’re-”

“Yes, Clay,” George responded, smiling softly as he shook his head. “I am Gogy.”

“I’m still so confused,” Clay admitted. “Was it a prank? Did you always know?”

George chuckled to himself. “Oh, heavens no. I was completely genuine about everything, no idea who you were or anything of the sort. I was just as oblivious as you were until the zoo day when you gave me the-”

“The letter!” Clay finished, covering his face with his hands. “Of course, you recognized it! God, I’m such an idiot.”

Clay’s breath hitched as he felt a thin hand reach out to his hands and remove his fingers from his face.

“Hi,” Clay greeted stupidly, eyes now uncovered.

“Hi,” George repeated, an equally stupid grin on his face.

“I feel so stupid.”

“You can imagine how *I* felt when I figured it out. I had to piece this shit together myself.”

Clay chuckled, the rain now picking up exponentially.

“Jesus, it’s pouring,” Clay exclaimed, getting up to grab his board. As much as he relished in the conversation with Gogy- *George*- he couldn’t deny he wasn’t exactly keen on having to replace his board bearings if they got water damage.

“I have an umbrella!” the brunet called out, leading to a relieved sigh from Clay.

“Thank God.”

Clay watched as the brunet opened the large black umbrella, him ushering for Clay to join him under it.

“God, George, it’s so low. Pick your arm up,” Clay teased, the umbrella much too short for his 6’3 self.

“Can’t,” the boy said bluntly, motioning towards his arm. “It hurts.”

Clay lightheartedly rolled his eyes, switching the items between the two so George was holding Clay’s board and Clay was carrying the umbrella over the two.

“So,” Clay started, staring at George, “can you explain everything to me again?”

And thus, George did.

He told him about how he was constantly asking “Dream” for advice on how to get with Clay, and how he noticed patterns but was too dumb to put them together. He talked about how he was afraid that simply telling Clay that he was Gogy would be unbelievable, or perhaps not grave enough, so he opted for a scavenger hunt. In George’s words, it was “clearly not a good idea, considering it left you screaming at me in the middle of the pouring rain.”

He told Clay about his plans with Niki, and how Sapnap knew. That elicited an admittedly perplexed reaction from Clay; Sapnap was usually shit at keeping secrets. Clay internally applauded his friend for being able to hide such a thing.

Throughout the entire explanation of George’s, however, all Clay could find himself doing was studying the features of the boy in front of him: the dripping dampness of his hair from the rain, the pink of his cheeks, the small dot of freckles underneath his eyes. When he smiled, Clay noticed, it was slightly lopsided, in a way that was both endearing and somehow incredibly perplexing, as if Clay wanted to study his smile over and over again.

He was beautiful.

“George?” Clay interrupted, thoughts consuming his attention span.

The brunet looked up at him - *it is really cute he has to look up to meet my gaze* , Clay thought offhandedly to himself - and smiled challengingly. “Yeah?”

“Was this enough time for you to tell me what you meant by ‘leading me on’?”

The brunet giggled softly to himself. “Clay, is it not obvious? I didn’t want to talk to you knowing I knew you were Dream. It felt disingenuous.”

Wind echoed through the interludes of their sentences.

“Now, I feel like a genuine piece of shit,” Clay muttered, shaking his head.

George grinned, gilded honey tinting his skin. “Clay?”

Clay looked down at the boy. “Yeah?”

Clay’s heart lurched as he felt George lightly connect their fingers in each of their unused hands.

“Was this enough time for you to tell me why you incontrovertibly hated me when we first met?” His tone was joking, but Clay knew there was sincerity buried in the words. He may not have known he was Gogy, but Clay *knew* George.

“I never hated you,” Clay said simply.

George giggled, seemingly disbelievingly. “While I appreciate the sentiment, Clay, I’m serious, why? Please, don’t sugarcoat this.”

Clay shrugged nonchalantly. “I’m not sugarcoating anything, George. I never hated you.”

Rain reflected off of George’s eyes as the boy traced shapes into Clay’s palm. “Explain, please?” His voice wasn’t anything over a breath.

“Are you sure?”

George nodded.

“When I first saw you, my first thought was that you were pretty. I *never* think that about people upon first glance, especially not-” Clay’s voice trailed off.

“Guys?” George finished apprehensively. Clay nodded.

“Yeah, guys.” George motioned for Clay to continue, and so he did. “It was as if my heart was almost envious of you; you looked perfect, you seemed cool, and I soon found out you were smart too. My first instinct was to repress it, but I knew I couldn’t just *ignore* it. I’m a naturally flirty guy.”

“So, you thought pretending to hate me might’ve rid you of your feelings for me?” George asked, face unreadable.

“Yeah,” Clay exhaled. George’s hand abruptly stopped tracing shapes onto his hand.

“Did it- did it,” George stuttered. His volume shrunk to nothing over a whisper. “Did it work?”

Clay took the liberty of intertwining their fingers once more, grip gentle but firm. “God, no.”

Clay’s heart practically fluttered as George’s indecipherable expression morphed into a blush-cheeked grin. Thus, he continued.

“George, after that thing at Karl’s house where we kissed, my mind was practically swimming with all things *George*. That’s why I asked Gogy - you, apparently - for love advice!” Clay exclaimed light-heartedly,

George giggled to himself. “Well, my advice must’ve worked pretty well then.” George’s grip on Clay’s hand became more secure as well.

Clay’s eyes darted to his peripheral vision, making note of the rain and the two huddled up beneath the umbrella.

“This is kind of cliché, isn’t it?”

George stared at him, face as ruddy and intoxicating as always.

Clay watched silently, not even daring to breathe as George’s eyes hastily flickered between his gaze and his lips.

George slowly moved closer to him, breath ghosting above his lips.

“Is it so bad to be cliché?”

With that, Clay connected their lips, sun meeting moon, letter meeting pen, stupid poetry meeting stupid scavenger hunt.

Clay had discovered who Gogy was.

He had simultaneously discovered who *he* was as well.

And who was he, exactly?

He was in love with George.

Chapter End Notes

HOPE Y'ALL ENJOYED!!!

hopefully this wasn't a disappointing penultimate chapter. we have one chapter to go folks :) bittersweet, really, because i really enjoyed all of y'all's comments! im glad you guys are enjoying this, really.

quite honestly, im kinda losing motivation to write ./ i will finish up this story next chapter ofc, it just might take a couple more days. i will probably continue writing in the future, i just might be taking a little hiatus. love u all <3

for now, thank you for reading <3 ily all so much. as always, any comments, kudos, bookmarks, etc., are so cool :) PS DRINK SOME WATER RN!

ps: [stragic-tragic](#) on tumblr made some GORGEOUS art for this chapter!! pls check it out

twenty-two ○ what can i do to make you not hate me

Chapter Summary

fin. twenty-two of twenty-two.

Chapter Notes

well, this is it folks.

i just want to say how much i absolutely adore each and every one of you. your support was really the only thing pushing me to write this. every nice comment, every kudos, AH it just makes me love y'all. (i came back to see this had 30k hits and 1.5k kudos. oh boy /pos)

if you didn't notice, this chapter took me the longest it has ever taken me to get one out. i lost a lot of motivation to do this, but knew that this story deserved a true ending. so, here y'all go. this has been a fun journey and ily all so much /p. more at the end :)

(PS I made a twitter! it's @hiclore!)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

GEORGE

“You are such an idiot,” George tsked, head leaning on Clay’s shoulder as they sat next to each other on the couch.

“Sorry, *Gogy*,” Clay teased, leading to a quick flick to the head from George.

“I can’t believe you didn’t realize before me.”

“I can’t believe you didn’t catch on when you met my sister!” Clay light-heartedly retorted. “How many 6’3 blond guys do you know with a sister named *Drista* ?”

“Okay,” George conceded, “A mistake on my part.”

They sat in a comfortable silence, George leaning into the feeling of Clay's fingers as the blond eventually brought his hand up and played with the brunet's hair.

After a few soundless moments, the blond cleared his throat. George raised his eyebrows at the sudden sound, but let his head remain on Clay's shoulder all the same.

"Were you disappointed?" Clay finally asked.

George finally lifted his head so he could look Clay in the eye. "Disappointed at what?"

"When you realized I was Dream."

George giggled, adamantly shaking his head. "No, you idiot," he said between smiles. "I was probably more infatuated than before."

Clay smirked, cupping one of George's cheeks with his hand.

"So, you think I'm infatuating?" he teased, another playful flick to the forehead soon following.

After the playful moment died down, George now spoke up.

"What about you?"

The blond raised an eyebrow. "What about me?"

"Were you disappointed?"

George felt a rush of anxiety flow over him when Clay didn't immediately answer. After a few seconds, however, the taller of the two spoke.

"It was just confusion at first. Once I realized you were *actually* him, though, and that you were

being genuine, it just made me like you even more,” he said with a soft grin.

George couldn't help but smile fondly at the boy next to him.

The brunet leaned his head back onto the shoulder of Clay, the blond craning his neck to the side to make more room for him.

“What are we?” George sighed.

Clay seemed lost in thought for a moment before he replied. “What do you want to be?”

“Yours,” George replied simply.

“Don't worry,” Clay replied softly, hand traveling back towards George's hair. “You already are, idiot.”

George and Clay eventually shifted, lying comfortably next to each other on George's bed. George let his head rest on Clay's chest as he twiddled with his fingers, internally grateful that Clay was such a touchy person.

It was strange, George thought, all of it.

Leaning into Clay's touch, however, he was okay with life being strange.

George felt his eyes slowly flutter closed, drifting off away towards the cusp of consciousness.

At this, the sound of a door opening caught the two by surprise, jumping away from where the boys were situated.

In the doorway stood Sapnap, eyes wide and mouth slightly ajar.

“What the hell did I miss?” the brunet exclaimed, hand pushing back his hair from his forehead in surprise.

George and Clay erupted into an orchestra of giggles, laughter swimming around the bubble the two had created.

The brunet eyed the two, eyebrows slightly raised until he made a hum of understanding. “Is Clay finally not an oblivious idiot?”

George nodded, turning to smile at the boy he had kissed only hours ago. “Mhmm,” he acknowledged. “It took a bit of explanation though.”

George’s heart leaped as he watched the blond chuckle. “You’re such an idiot,” he said light-heartedly, shaking his head.

George scooted over, returning to being thigh-to-thigh with the blond. “You’re *more* of an idiot,” George retorted, nudging Clay endearingly on the shoulder.

“Stop,” Clay drew out, groaning in feigned annoyance. “That hurt.”

“Jesus Christ,” Sapnap interrupted light-heartedly from the doorway. “Y’all are so annoying. Remind me to never help set up my friends again,” he called out, already turning away and closing the door.

George moved his gaze from Sapnap to Clay, and surprisingly, the blond’s eyes were already set on him.

Immediately, the two erupted into laughter once again, thriving in the comfort of what both deemed unattainable only days ago.

“You’re so cute when you laugh,” Clay pointed out, smile wide and welcoming.

George could feel a steady heat rise towards his cheeks. “You’re so dumb.”

At this, Clay shifted closer to the boy.

His gaze flickered to George's lips, just as they had under the umbrella. "Is it okay if I kiss you again, George?"

George giggled, his laughter ghosting over Clay's lips. "You don't have to ask, *Dream*."

And so, he did.

CLAY

"So, you guys are *finally* together?" the blonde exclaimed, tone giddy and relieved.

"What do you mean by 'finally', Niki?" Clay challenged light-heartedly.

Niki rolled her eyes, an unimpressed look on her face. "Oh, come on Clay. We all knew this would happen if you two just opened your eyes."

"Was the situation *that* obvious?" Clay asked, beginning to dig into his lunch.

"Respectfully, it was painfully clear," Bad joined in with a giggle.

At this, Clay watched as George arrived at the group's table and sat next to him.

"What was painfully clear?" George bud in. Almost instinctively, Clay pressed a chaste kiss to the boy's forehead before continuing eating. He didn't miss the redness of George's cheeks, however.

“That,” Niki said, matter-of-factly.

“Well, yeah, I wasn’t exactly subtle,” George offered.

“Oh, c’mon now, George. You were oblivious, too,” Clay pointed out.

“Whatever, *Dream* .”

At the nickname - George had been using it a lot recently - Clay felt his cheeks warm.

“Not so tough now, are you Dream?” George whispered teasingly.

Despite the clear undertones, Clay rolled his eyes and scoffed. “Idiot.”

SAPNAP

“I’m telling you, Karl, they worked it out!” Sapnap claimed, relaxing next to the brunette on his couch.

“No way ,” Sapnap’s boyfriend retorted. “They are genuinely clueless. I’m calling BS.”

“I swear to God, they were practically making out in George’s room.”

“Nope!” Karl said finitely, leaning his head onto Sapnap’s shoulder.

Sapnap let his hand run through Karl’s hair lightly, not bothering to move it once it sat atop his head.

At this, the door of Sapnap's house opened.

Unsurprisingly, not only was George there, but Clay as well.

"George!" Sapnap exclaimed.

"Is that the Clay-meister?" Karl asked jokingly, leading to a nudge from Sapnap.

"That it is," Clay greeted, walking through the doorway.

Karl cleared his throat. "A little birdie told me-"

"By birdie, do you mean Sapnap?" George interrupted.

"That depends," Sapnap began, rolling his eyes. "Is this birdie furiously handsome?"

"Nope," Karl joked back.

Sapnap flipped his boyfriend off before Karl resumed talking. "Anyways, Sapnap told me you two were together?"

Sapnap held in a giggle as the two boys' faces immediately flushed.

George practically choked. "I mean, we're not *technically* 'dating' but-"

"If George *wants* to be, then-" Clay stuttered.

"See!" Karl exclaimed. "Absolute cluelessness!"

CLAY

Clay and George walked hand-in-hand towards Clay's locker, Clay using his free hand to complete the combination lock.

Surprisingly, as it opened, a letter fell out.

A letter from Gogy.

"Oh my God," George exclaimed. "The last letter I wrote to you was from before I knew you were Dream. *Please* do not read into this."

Clay chuckled, putting his things down and grabbing the letter from the ground.

"Should I read it out loud?" Clay asked, giggling.

"Please, no."

Clay smirked smugly, clearing his throat. He thus began reading:

"'I'm sure the guy you like will love it,' it being the poem," Clay explained. "'If he doesn't' - I did - 'he isn't worth shit. You have me though'."

Clay laughed as George's face reddened with embarrassment.

"Guess I'm worth shit, then."

"Idiot."

Clay continued. “‘Now... about the person in my life... oh boy, where to start.’ Ooh, this should be interesting.”

“No!” George exclaimed, face ruddy and meek.

“ *C’mo*n , it’s cute. Okay, continuing. ‘He is so kind. Well, he is now, I should say. At first, we didn’t necessarily see eye to eye.’ True!”

“I hate you,” George retorted, arms crossed.

Clay tsked, eyeing the letter once again. “Oh really? Let’s start with the next line then. ‘He is super fucking pretty as well. His hair is golden - like genuinely aurelian. He is literally a Greek God.’”

“Fuck you.”

“Aww, George, you think I’m a Greek God?” Clay teased as the shorter of the two rolled his eyes dramatically.

“I will literally punch you,” George stated matter-of-factly.

“Continuing!” Clay exclaimed with a sing-songy tone. “‘He is funny, too. I’d never tell him, though - just like you, he’s got a huge ego-’ Ouch, George. ‘I know I sound like a simp, - I am, to be honest - but I like him.’”

“Please, stop,” George instructed with fabricated anger.

“You are so cute, Georgie,” Clay said, smiling softly at the boy.

“You are terrible. I genuinely hate you,” George said, clearly trying and failing not to smile.

“What can I do to make you not hate me?” Clay asked, playing into George’s feigned anger.

“You could kiss me, for one.”

“Oh, really?” Clay said, a brow raised. The brunet nodded. “Okay, then.”

Clay planted a soft and quick kiss onto George’s lips, not enough to be extensive, but enough so that the feeling would linger.

George giggled softly, whispering something endearingly soft into the blond’s ear.

The two boys intertwined their fingers, standing hand-in-hand.

There they were, one overthinking exchange student and one coldly brash skater, locker letter in one hand, and intertwined fingers in the other.

Chapter End Notes

i hope you all enjoyed this ending.

i love each and every one of you /p. thank you for reading!

i know i promised i would try to work on a piece after this, but i have somewhat lost my motivation for writing at the moment. eventually, i will make my grand return, and i hope i can count on y'all's support then <3 i think in the near future, if i do have any projects, they'll be on the shorter side! (think like a one or two part story, 5k words lol)

i just want to say i've read every comment, bookmark, etc, and they genuinely make my day. thank you to all of you for sticking through this with me. thankfully, george and clay (and gogy and dream) got their happy endings.

now, for the final time (yes. i am being overdramatic. i enjoy the theatrics of this hehe), i'll ask for any comments, kudos, whatever. love you all <3 thanks for everything.

End Notes

i hope u enjoyed :)) as always, any comments, criticism, kudos, and input in general are soooo appreciated :)

if u want to check it out, or perhaps scream at me, here's my [twitter](#)

have a good day, drink water, get some rest, and remember you are amazing and valid and ily!!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!